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MARK TWAIN

MARK TWAIN

BY

ARCHIBALD HENDERSON

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TO

C. ALPHONSO SMITH

SCHOLAR, GOOD FELLOW, FRIEND

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“Haply—who knows?—somewhere
In Avalon, Isle of Dreams,
In vast contentment at last,
With every grief done away,
While Chaucer and Shakespeare wait,
And Molière hangs on his words,
And Cervantes not far off
Listens and smiles apart,
With that incomparable drawl
He is jesting with Dagonet now.”

Bliss Carman.

PREFACE

There are to-day, all over the world, men and women and children who owe a debt of almost personal gratitude to Mark Twain for the joy of his humour and the charm of his personality. In the future they will, I doubt not, seek and welcome opportunities to acknowledge that debt. My own experience with the works of Mark Twain is in no sense exceptional. From the days of early childhood, my feeling for Mark Twain, derived first solely from acquaintance with his works, was a feeling of warm and, as it were, personal affection. With limitless interest and curiosity, I used to hear the Uncle Remus stories from the lips of one of our old family servants, a negro to whom I was devotedly attached. These stories were narrated to me in the negro dialect with such perfect naturalness and racial gusto that I often secretly wondered if the narrator were not Uncle Remus himself in disguise. I was thus cunningly prepared, " coached " shall I say, for the maturer charms of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn.* With Uncle Remus and Mark Twain as my preceptors, I spent the days of my youth —excitedly alternating, spell-bound, between the inexhaustible attractions of Tom, Huck, Jim, Indian Joe, the Duke and the Dauphin, and their compeers on the one hand ; and Brer Rabbit, Sis Cow, and a thousand other fantastic, but very real creatures of the animal kingdom on the other.

I felt a strange sort of *camaraderie*, of personal attachment, for Mark Twain during all the years before I came into personal contact with him. It was the dictum of a distinguished English critic, to the effect that *Huckleberry Finn* was a literary masterpiece, which first awoke in me, then a mere boy, a genuine respect for literary criticism ; for here was expressed an opinion which *I* had long secretly cherished, but somehow never dared to utter !

My personal association with Mr. Clemens, comparatively brief though it was—an ocean voyage, meetings here and there, a brief stay as a guest in his home—gave me at last the justification for paying the debt which, with the years, had grown greater and more insistently obligatory. I felt both relief and pleasure when he authorized me to pay that debt by writing an interpretation of his life and work.

It is an appreciation originating in the heart of one who loved Mark Twain's works for a generation before he ever met Samuel L. Clemens. It is an interpretation springing from the conviction that Mark Twain was a great American who comprehensively incorporated and realized his own country and his own age as no American has so completely done before him; a supreme humorist who ever wore the *panache* of youth, gaiety, and *bonhomie*; a brilliant wit who never dipped his darts in the poison of cynicism, misanthropy, or despair; constitutionally a reformer who, heedless of self, boldly struck for the right as he saw it; a philosopher and sociologist who intuitively understood the secret springs of human motive and impulse, and empirically demonstrated that intuition in works which crossed frontiers, survived translation, and went straight to the human, beneath the disguise of the racial; a genius who lived to know and enjoy the happy rewards of his own fame; a great man who saw life steadily and saw it whole.

ARCHIBALD HENDERSON.

LONDON,
August 5, 1910.

NOTE.—The author esteems himself in the highest degree fortunate in having the co-operation of Mr. Alvin Langdon Coburn. All the illustrations, both autochrome and monochrome, are the work of Mr. Coburn.

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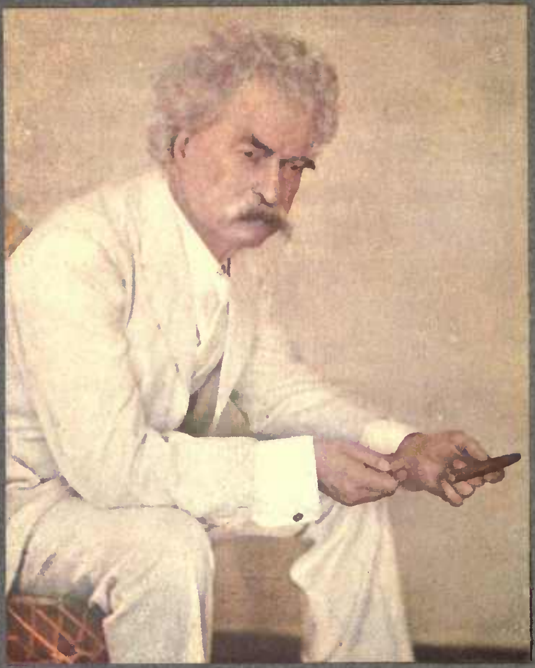
I. INTRODUCTORY

"I've a theory that every author, while living, has a projection of himself, a sort of eidolon, that goes about in near and distant places, and makes friends and enemies for him out of folk who never knew him in the flesh. When the author dies, this phantom fades away, not caring to continue business at the old stand. Then the dead writer lives only in the impression made by his literature; this impression may grow sharper or fainter according to the fashions and new conditions of the time."

Letter of THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH *to* WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS *of date December 23,* 1901.



INTRODUCTORY

In the past, the attitude of the average American toward Mark Twain has been most characteristically expressed in a sort of complacent and chuckling satisfaction. There was pride in the thought that America, the colossal, had produced a superman of humour. The national vanity was touched when the nations of the world rocked and roared with laughter over the comically primitive barbarisms of the funny man from the " Wild and Woolly West." Mark Twain was lightly accepted as an international comedian magically evoking the laughter of a world. It would be a mis-statement to affirm that the works of Mark Twain were reckoned as falling within the charmed circle of " Literature." They were not reckoned in connexion with literature at all.

The fingers of one hand number those who realized in Mark Twain one of the supreme geniuses of our age. Even in the event of his death, when the flood-gates of critical chatter have been thrown emptily wide, there is room for grave doubt whether a realization of the unique and incomparable position of Mark Twain in the republic of letters has fully dawned upon the American consciousness. The literatures of England and Europe do not posit an æsthetic, embracing work of such primitive crudity and apparently unstudied frankness as the work of Mark Twain. It is for American criticism to posit this more comprehensive æsthetic, and to demonstrate that the work of Mark Twain is the work of a great artist. It would be absurd to maintain that Mark Twain's appeal to posterity depends upon the *dicta* of literary criticism. It would be absurd to deny that upon America rests the task of demonstrating, to a world willing enough to be convinced, that Mark Twain is one of the supreme and imperishable glories of American literature.

At any given moment in history, the number of living writers to whom can be attributed what a Frenchman would call *mondial éclat* is surprisingly few. It was not so many years ago that Rudyard Kipling, with vigorous, imperialistic note, won for himself the unquestioned title of militant spokesman for the Anglo-Saxon race. That fame has suffered eclipse in the passage of time. To-day, Bernard

Shaw has a fame more world-wide than that of any other literary figure in the British Isles. His dramas are played from Madrid to Helsingfors, from Buda-Pesth to Stockholm, from Vienna to St Petersburg, from Berlin to Buenos Ayres. Recently Zola, Ibsen, and Tolstoy constituted the literary hierarchy of the world—according to popular verdict. Since Zola and Ibsen have passed from the scene, Tolstoy exerts unchallenged the profoundest influence upon the thought and consciousness of the world. This is an influence streaming less from his works than from his life, less from his intellect than from his conscience. The *literati* bemoan the artist of an epoch prior to *What is Art*? The whole world pays tribute to the passionate integrity of Tolstoy's moral aspiration.*

Until yesterday, Mark Twain vied with Tolstoy for the place of most widely read and most genuinely popular author in the world. In a sense not easily misunderstood, Mark Twain has a place in the minds and hearts of the great mass of humanity throughout the civilized world, which, if measured in terms of affection, sympathy, and spontaneous enjoyment, is without a parallel. The robust nationalism of Kipling challenges the defiant opposition of foreigners; whilst his reportorial realism offends many an inviolable canon of European taste. With all his incandescent wit and comic irony, Bernard Shaw makes his most vivid impression upon the upper strata of society; his legendary character, moreover, is perpetually standing in the light of the serious reformer. Tolstoy's works are Russia's greatest literary contribution to posterity; and yet his literary fame has suffered through his extravagant ideals, the magnificent futility of his inconsistency, and the almost maniacal mysticism of his unrealizable hopes.

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* While this book was going through the press, news has come of the death of Tolstoy.

If Mark Twain makes a more deeply, more comprehensively popular appeal, it is doubtless because he makes use of the universal solvent of humour. That eidolon of which Aldrich speaks —a compact of good humour, robust sanity, and large-minded humanity—has diligently " gone about in near and distant places," everywhere making warm and lifelong friends of folk of all nationalities who have never known Mark Twain in the flesh. The French have a way of speaking of an author's public as if it were a select and limited segment of the conglomerate of readers; and in a country like France, with its innumerable literary cliques and sects, there is some reason for the phraseology. In reality, the author appeals to many different "publics" or classes of readers—in proportion to the many-sidedness of the reader's human interests and the catholicity of his tastes. Mark Twain first opens the eyes of many a boy to the power of the great human book, warm with the actuality of experience and the life-blood of the heart. By humorous inversion, he points the sound moral and vivifies the right principle for the youth to whom the dawning consciousness of morality is the first real psychological discovery of life. With hearty laughter at the stupid irritations of self-conscious virtue, with ironic scorn for the frigid Puritanism of mechanical morality, Mark Twain enraptures that innumerable company of the sophisticated who have chafed under the omnipresent influence of a "good example" and stilled the painless pangs of an unruly conscience. With splendid satire for the base, with shrill condemnation for tyranny and oppression, with the scorpion-lash for the equivocal, the fraudulent, and the insincere, Mark Twain inspires the growing body of reformers in all countries who would remedy the ills of democratic government with the knife of publicity. The wisdom of human experience and of sagacious tolerance informing his books for the young, provokes the question whether these books are not more apposite to the tastes of experienced age than to the fancies of callow youth. The navvy may rejoice in *Life on the Mississippi.* Youth and age may share without jealousy the abounding fun and primitive naturalness of *Huckleberry Finn.* True lovers of adventure may revel in the masterly narrative of *Tom Sawyer.* The artist may bestow his critical meed of approval upon the beauty of *Joan of Arc.* The moralist may heartily validate the ethical lesson of *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg.* Anyone may pay the tribute of irresistible explosions of laughter to the horse-play of *Roughing It,* the colossal extravagance of *The Innocents Abroad,* the irreverence and iconoclasm of that Yankee intruder into the hallowed confines of Camelot. All may rejoice in the spontaneity and refreshment of truth; spiritually co-operate in forthright condemnation of fraud, peculation, and sham; and breathe gladly the fresh and bracing air of sincerity, sanity, and wisdom. The stevedore on the dock, the motor-man on the street car, the newsboy on the street, the riverman on the Mississippi—all speak with exuberant affection in memory of that quaint figure in his white suit, his ruddy face shining through wreaths of tobacco smoke and surmounted by a great halo of silvery hair. In one day, as Mark Twain was fond of relating, an emperor and a *portier* vied with each other in tributes of admiration and esteem for this man and his works. It is Mark Twain's imperishable glory, not simply that his name is the most familiar of that of any author who has lived in our own times, but that it is remembered with infinite and irrepressible zest.

"We think of Mark Twain not as other celebrities, but as the man whom we knew and loved," said Dr. Van Dyke in his Memorial Address. "We remember the realities which made his life worth while, the strong and natural manhood that was in him, the depth and tenderness of his affections, his laughing enmity to all shams and pretences, his long and faithful witness to honesty and fair-dealing.

"Those who know the story of Mark Twain's career know how bravely he faced hardships and misfortune, how loyally he toiled for years to meet a debt of conscience, following the injunction of the New Testament, to provide not only things honest, but things 'honourable in the sight of all men.'

"Those who know the story of his friendships and his family life know that he was one who loved much and faithfully, even unto the end. Those who know his work as a whole know that under the lambent and irrepressible humour which was his gift, there was a foundation of serious thoughts and noble affections and desires.

"Nothing could be more false than to suppose that the presence of humour means the absence of depth and earnestness. There are elements of the unreal, the absurd, the ridiculous in this strange, incongruous world which must seem humorous even to the highest mind. Of these the Bible says: 'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Almighty shall hold them in derision.' But the mark of this higher humour is that it does not laugh at the weak, the helpless, the true, the innocent; only at the false, the pretentious, the vain, the hypocritical.

"Mark Twain himself would be the first to smile at the claim that his humour was infallible; but we say without doubt that he used his gift, not for evil, but for good. The atmosphere of his work is clean and wholesome. He made fun without hatred. He laughed many of the world's false claimants out of court, and entangled many of the world's false witnesses in the net of ridicule. In his best books and stories, coloured with his own experiences, he touched the absurdities of life with penetrating, but not unkindly, mockery, and made us feel somehow the infinite pathos of life's realities. No one can say that he ever failed to reverence the purity, the frank, joyful, genuine nature of the little children, of whom Christ said, 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

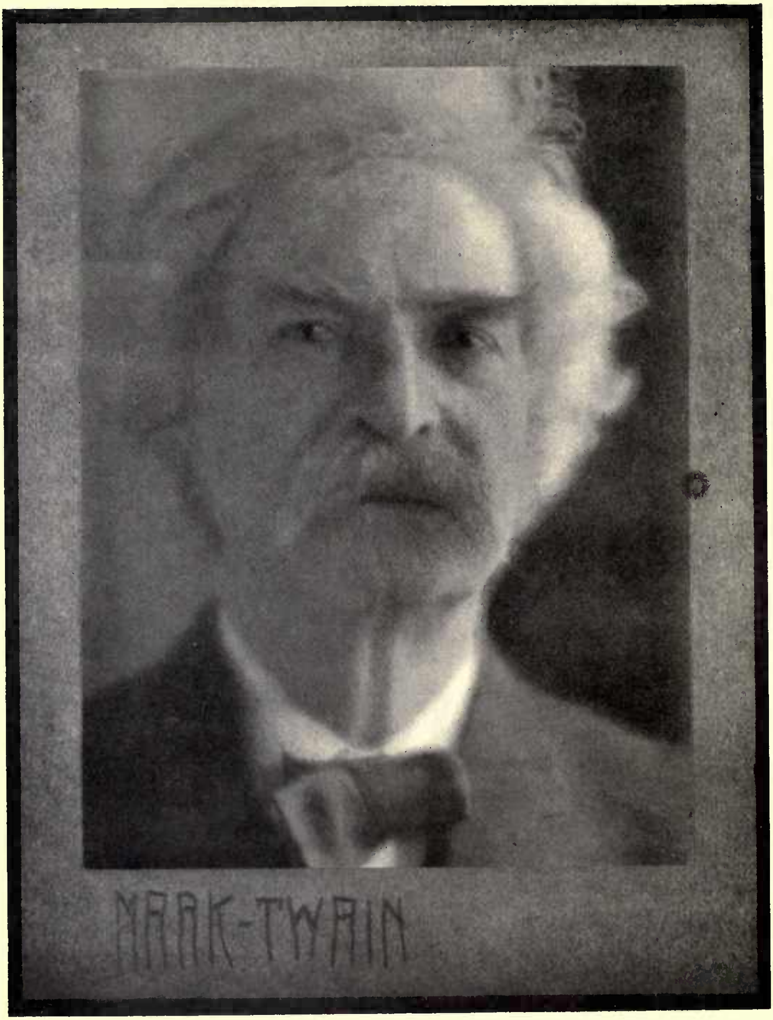
"Now he is gone, and our thoughts of him are tender, grateful, proud. We are glad of his friendship; glad that he expressed so richly one of the great elements in the temperament of America; glad that he has left such an honourable record as a man of letters; and glad also for his own sake that after many and deep sorrows he is at peace and, we trust, happy in the fuller light.

"'Rest after toil, port after stormy seas,
Death after life doth greatly please.'"

II. THE MAN

"'We cannot live always on the cold heights of the sublime—the thin air stifles'—I have forgotten who said it. We cannot flush always with the high ardour of the signers of the Declaration, nor remain at the level of the address at Gettysburg, nor cry continually, 'O Beautiful! My country!' Yet, in the long dull interspans between these sacred moments we need some one to remind us that we are a nation. For in the dead vast and middle of the years insidious foes are lurking—anæmic refinements, cosmopolitan decadencies, the egotistic and usurping pride of great cities, the cold sickening of the heart at the reiterated exposures of giant fraud and corruption. When our countrymen migrate because we have no kings or castles, we are thankful to any one who will tell us what we can count on. When they complain that our soil lacks the humanity essential to great literature, we are grateful even for the firing of a national joke heard round the world. And when Mark Twain, robust, big-hearted, gifted with the divine power to use words, makes us all laugh together, builds true romances with prairie fire and Western clay, and shows us that we are at one on all the main points, we feel that he has been appointed by Providence to see to it that the precious ordinary self of the Republic shall suffer no harm."

STUART P. SHERMAN: "MARK TWAIN."
The Nation, May 12, 1910.


MARK-TWAIN

THE MAN

American literature, indeed I might say American life, can exhibit no example of supreme success from the humblest beginnings, so signal as the example of Mark Twain. Lincoln became President of the United States, as did Grant and Johnson. But assassination began for Lincoln an apotheosis which has gone to deplorable lengths of hero-worship and adulation. Grant was one of the great failures in American public life; and Johnson, brilliant but unstable, narrowly escaped impeachment. Mark Twain enjoys the unique distinction of exhibiting a progressive development, a deepening and broadening of forces, a ripening of intellectual and spiritual powers from the beginning to the end of his career. From the standpoint of the man of letters, the evolution of Mark Twain from a journeyman printer to a great author, from a merry-andrew to a world-humorist, from a river-pilot to a trustworthy navigator on the vast and uncharted seas of human experience, may be taken as symbolic of the romance of American life.

With a sort of mock-pride, Clemens referred at times to the ancestral glories of his house—the judge who condemned Charles I., and all those other notables, of Dutch and English breeds, who shed lustre upon the name of Clemens. Yet he claimed that he had not examined into these traditions, chiefly because "I was so busy polishing up this end of the line and trying to make it showy." His mother, a "Lambton with a p," of Kentucky, married John Marshall Clemens, of Virginia, a man of determination and force, in Lexington, in 1823; but neither was endowed with means, and their life was of the simplest. From Jamestown, in the mountain solitudes of East Tennessee, they removed in 1829, much as Judge Hawkins is said to have done in *The Gilded Age*, settling at Florida, Missouri. Here was born, on November 30, 1835, a few months after their arrival, Samuel Langhorne Clemens. Long afterwards he stated that he had increased by one per cent. the population of this village of one hundred inhabitants, thereby doing more than the best man in history had ever done for any other town.

Although weak and sickly, the child did not suffer from the hard life, and survived two other children, Margaret and Benjamin. At different times his life was in danger, the local doctor always coming to the rescue. He once asked his mother, after she had reached old age, if she hadn't been uneasy about him. She admitted she had been uneasy about him the whole time. But when he inquired further if she was afraid he would not live, she answered after a reflective pause—as if thinking out the facts—that she had been afraid he would!

His sister Pamela afterwards became the mother of Samuel E. Moffett, the writer; and his brother Orion, ten years his senior, afterwards was intimately associated with him in life and found a place in his writings.

In 1839, John Marshall Clemens tired of the unpromising life of Florida and removed to Hannibal, Missouri. He was a stern, unbending man, a lawyer by profession, a merchant by vocation; after his removal to Hannibal he became a Justice of the Peace, an office he filled with all the dignity of a local autocrat. His forum was a "dingy" office, furnished with "a dry-goods box, three or four rude stools, and a puncheon bench." The solemnity of his manner in administering the law won for him, among his neighbours, the title of Judge.

One need but recall the scenes in which Tom Sawyer was born and bred to realize in its actuality the model from which these scenes were drawn. "Sam was always a good-hearted boy," his mother once remarked, "but he was a very wild and mischievous one, and, do what we would, we could never make him go to school. This used to trouble his father and me dreadfully, and we were convinced that he would never amount to as much in the world as his brothers, because he was not near so steady and sober-minded as they were." At school, he "excelled only in spelling"; outside of school he was the prototype of his own Huckleberry Finn, mischievous and prankish, playing truant whenever the opportunity afforded. "Often his father would start him off to school," his mother once said, "and in a little while would follow him to ascertain his whereabouts. There was a large stump on the way to the schoolhouse, and Sam would take his position behind that, and as his father went past would gradually circle around it in such a way as to keep out of sight. Finally, his father and the teacher both said it was of no use to try to teach Sam anything, because he was determined not to learn. But I never gave up. He was always a great boy for history, and could never get tired of that kind of reading; but he hadn't any use for schoolhouses and text books."

Mr. Howells has aptly described Hannibal as a "loafing, out-at-elbows, down-at-the-heels, slaveholding Mississippi river town." Young Clemens accepted the institution of slavery as a matter of course, for his father was a slave-owner; and his mother's wedding dowry consisted in part of two or three slaves. Judge Clemens was a very austere man; like so many other slave-holders, he silently abhorred slavery. To his children, especially to Sam, as well as to his slaves, he was, however, a stern taskmaster. Mark Twain has described the terms on which he and his father lived as a sort of armed neutrality. If at times this neutrality was broken and suffering ensued, the breaking and the suffering were always divided up with strict impartiality between them—his father doing the breaking and he the suffering! Sam claimed to be a very backward, cautious, unadventurous boy. But this modest estimate is subject to modification when we learn that once he jumped off a two-story stable; another time he gave an elephant a plug of tobacco, and retired without waiting for an answer; and still another time he pretended to be talking in his sleep, and got off a portion of every original conundrum in hearing of his father. He begs the curious not to pry into the result—as it was of no consequence to any one but himself!

The cave, so graphically described in *Tom Sawyer*, was one of Sam's favourite haunts; and his first sweetheart was Laura Hawkins, the Becky Thatcher of Tom's admiration. "Sam was always up to some mischief," this lady once remarked in later life, when in reminiscential mood. "We attended Sunday-school together, and they had a system of rewards for saying verses after committing them to memory. A blue ticket was given for ten verses, a red ticket for ten blue, a yellow for ten red, and a Bible for ten yellow tickets. If you will count up, you will see it makes a Bible for ten thousand verses. Sam came up one day with his ten yellow tickets, and everybody knew he had not said a verse, but had just got them by trading with the boys. But he received his Bible with all the serious air of a diligent student!"

Mark Twain, save when in humorous vein, has never pretended that his success was due to any marvellous qualities of mind, any indefatigable industry, any innate energy and perseverance. I have good reason to recall his favourite theory, which he was fond of expounding, to the effect that circumstance is man's master. He likened circumstance to the attraction of gravity ; and declared that while it is man's privilege to argue with circumstance, as it is the honourable privilege of the falling body to argue with the attraction of gravity, it does no good : man has to obey. Circumstance has as its working partner man's temperament, his natural disposition. Temperament is not the creation of man, but an innate quality ; over it he has no authority ; for its acts he cannot be held responsible. It cannot be permanently changed or even modified. No power can keep it modified. For it is inherent and enduring, as unchanging as the lines upon the thumb or the conformation of the skull. Throughout his life, circumstance seemed like a watchful spirit, switching his temperament into those channels of experience and development leading unerringly to the career of the author.

The death of Judge Clemens was the first link in the long chain of circumstance — for his son was at once taken from school and apprenticed to the editor and proprietor of the *Hannibal Courier*. He was allowed the usual emolument of the office of apprentice, " board and clothes, but no money " ; and even at that, though the board was paid, the clothes rarely materialized. Several weeks later his brother Orion returned to Hannibal, and in 1850 brought out a little paper called the *Hannibal Journal.* He took Sam out of the *Courier* office and engaged him for the *Journal* at $3.50 a week—though he was never able to pay a cent of the wages. One of Mark's fellow-townsmen once confessed: "Yes, I knew him when he was a boy. He was a printer's devil—I think that's what they called him—and they didn't miss it." At a banquet some years ago, Mark Twain aptly described at length his experiences as a printer's apprentice. There were a thousand and one menial services he was called upon to perform. If the subscribers paid at all, it was only sometimes—and then the town subscribers paid in groceries, the country subscribers in cabbages and cordwood. If they paid, they were puffed in the paper; and if the editor forgot to insert the puff, the subscriber stopped the paper! Every subscriber regarded himself as assistant editor, *ex officio*; gave orders as to how the paper was to be edited, supplied it with opinions, and directed its policy. Of course, every time the editor failed to follow his suggestions, he revenged himself by stopping the paper!

After some financial stress, the paper was moved into the Clemens home, a "two-story brick"; and here for several years it managed to worry along, spasmodically hovering between life and death. Life was easy with the editors of that paper; for if they pied a form, they suspended until the next week. They always suspended anyhow, every now and then, when the fishing was good; and always fell back upon the illness of the editor as a convenient excuse. Mark admitted that this was a paltry excuse, for the all-sufficing reason that a paper of that sort was just as well off with a sick editor as a well one, and better off with a dead one than with either of them. At the age of fifteen he considered himself a skilled journeyman printer; and his faculty for comedic portrayal had already betrayed itself in occasional clumsy efforts. In *My First Literary Venture,* he narrates his experiences, amongst others how greatly he increased the circulation of the paper, and incensed the "inveterate woman-killer," whose poetry for that week's paper read, "To Mary in H——l" (Hannibal). Mark added a "snappy foot-note" at the bottom, in which he agreed to let the thing pass, for just that once; but distinctly warning Mr. J. Gordon Runnels that the paper had a character to sustain, and that in future, when Mr. Runnels wanted to commune with his friends in h—l, he must select some other medium for that communication! Many were the humorous skits, crudely illustrated with cuts made from wooden blocks hacked out with his jack-knife, which the mischievous young " devil " inserted in his brother's paper. Here we may discern the first spontaneous outcroppings of the genuine humorist. " It was on this paper, the *Hannibal Journal*," says his biographer, Mr. Albert B. Paine, " that young Sam Clemens began his writings—burlesques, as a rule, of local characters and conditions—usually published in his brother's absence, generally resulting in trouble on his return. Yet they made the paper sell, and if Orion had but realized his possession he might have turned his brother's talent into capital even then."

One evening in 1853, the boy, consumed with *wanderlust*, asked his mother for five dollars—to start on his travels. He failed to receive the money, but he defiantly announced that he would go " anyhow." He had managed to save a tiny sum, and that night he disappeared and fled to St Louis. There he worked in the composing-room of the *Evening News* for a time, and then started out " to see the world "—New York, where a little World's Fair was in progress. He was somewhat better off than was Benjamin Franklin when he entered Philadelphia—for he had two or three dollars in pocket-change, and a ten-dollar bank-bill concealed in the lining of his coat. For a time he sweltered in a villainous mechanics' boarding-house in Duane Street, and worked at starvation wages in the printing-office of Gray & Green. Being recognized one day by a man from Hannibal, he fled to Philadelphia where he worked for some months as a " sub " on the *Inquirer* and the *Public Ledger*. Next came a flying trip to Washington " to see the sights there," and then back he went to the Mississippi Valley. This journey to the " vague and fabled East " really opened his eyes to the great possibilities that the world has in store for the traveller.

Meantime, Orion had gone to Muscatine, Ohio, and acquired a small interest there; and, after his marriage, he and his wife went to Keokuk and started a little job printing-office. Here Sam worked with his brother until the winter of 1856-7, when circumstance once again played the part of good fairy. As he was walking along the street one snowy evening, his attention was attracted by a piece of paper which the wind had blown against the wall. It proved to be a fifty-dollar bill; and after advertising for the owner for four days, he stealthily moved to Cincinnati in order " to take that money out of danger." Now comes the second crucial event in his life!

For long the ambition for river life had remained with him—and now there seemed some possibility of realizing these ambitions. He first wanted to be a cabin boy; then his ideal was to be a deck hand, because of his splendid conspicuousness as he stood on the end of the stage plank with a coil of rope in his hand. But these were only day-dreams—he didn't admit, even to himself, that they were anything more than heavenly impossibilities. But as he worked during the winter in the printing-office of Wrightson & Company of Cincinnati, he whiled away his leisure hours reading Lieutenant Herndon's account of his explorations of the Amazon, and became greatly interested in his description of the cocoa industry. Now he set to work to map out a new and thrilling career. The expedition sent out by the government to explore the Amazon had encountered difficulties and left unfinished the exploration of the country about the head-waters, thousands of miles from the mouth of the river. It mattered not to him that New Orleans was fifteen hundred miles away from Cincinnati, and that he had only thirty dollars left. His mind was made up: he would go on and complete the work of exploration. So in April, 1857, he set sail for New Orleans on an ancient tub, called the *Paul Jones*. For the paltry sum of sixteen dollars, he was enabled to revel in the unimagined glories of the main saloon. At last he was under way—realizing his boyhood dream, unable to contain himself for joy. At last he saw himself as that hero of his boyish fancy—*a traveller.*

When he reached New Orleans, after the prolonged ecstasy of two weeks on a tiny Mississippi steamer, he discovered that no ship was leaving for Pará, that there never had been one leaving for Pará, and that there probably would not be one leaving for Pará that century. A policeman made him move on, threatening to run him in if he ever caught him reflecting in the public street again. Just as his money failed him, his old friend circumstance arrived, with another turning-point in his life—a new link. On his way down the river he had met Horace Bixby; he turned to him in this hour of need. It has been charged against Mark Twain that he was deplorably lazy—apocryphal anecdotes are still narrated with much gusto to prove it. Think of a *lazy* boy undertaking the stupendous task of learning to know the intricate and treacherous secrets of the great river, to know every foot of the route in the dark as well as he knew his own face in the glass! And yet he confesses that he was unaware of the immensity of the undertaking upon which he had embarked.

"In 1852," says Bixby, "I was chief pilot on the *Paul Jones*, a boat that made occasional trips from Pittsburg to New Orleans. One day a tall, angular, hoosier-like young fellow, whose limbs appeared to be fastened with leather hinges, entered the pilot-house, and in a peculiar, drawling voice, said—

"'Good mawnin, sir. Don't you want to take er piert young fellow and teach 'im how to be er pilot?'

"'No sir; there is more bother about it than it's worth.'

"'I wish you would, mister. I'm er printer by trade, but it don't 'pear to 'gree with me, and I'm on my way to Central America for my health. I believe I'll make a tolerable good pilot, 'cause I like the river.'

"'What makes you pull your words that way?'

"'I don't know, mister; you'll have to ask my Ma. She pulls hern too. Ain't there some way that we can fix it, so that you'll teach me how to be er pilot?'

"'The only way is for money.'

"'How much are you going to charge?

" 'Well, I'll teach you the river for $500.'

" 'Gee whillikens! he! he! I ain't got $500, but I've got five lots in Keokuk, Iowa, and 2000 acres of land in Tennessee that is worth two bits an acre any time. You can have that if you want it.'

" I told him I did not care for his land, and after a while he agreed to pay $100 in cash (borrowed from his brother-in-law, William A. Moffett, of Virginia), $150 in twelve months, and the balance when he became a pilot. He was with me for a long time, but sometimes took occasional trips with other pilots." And he significantly adds: " He was always drawling out dry jokes, but then we did not pay any attention to him."

It cannot be thought accidental that Sam Clemens became a pilot. Bixby became his mentor, the pilot-house his recitation-room, the steamboat his university, the great river the field of knowledge. In that stupendous course in nature's own college, he " learned the river " as schoolboy seldom masters his Greek or his mathematics. With the naïve assurance of youth, he gaily enters upon the task of " learning " some twelve or thirteen hundred miles of the great Mississippi. Long afterwards, he confessed that had he really known what he was about to require of his faculties, he would never have had the courage to begin.

His comic sketches, published in the *Hannibal Weekly Courier* in his brother's absence, furnish the first link, his apprenticeship to Bixby the second link in the chain of circumstance. For two years and a half he sailed the river as a master pilot; his trustworthiness secured for him the command of some of the best boats on the river, and he was so skilful that he never met disaster on any of his trips. He narrowly escaped it in 1861, for when Louisiana seceded, his boat was drafted into the Confederate service. As he reached St. Louis, having taken passage for home, a shell came whizzing by and carried off part of the pilot-house. It was the end of an era: the Civil War had begun. The occupation of the pilot was gone; but the river had given up to him all of its secrets. He was to show them to a world, in *Life on the Mississippi* and *Huckleberry Finn.*

The story of the derivation of the famous *nom de guerre* has often been narrated—and as often erroneously. As the steamboat approaches a sandbank, snag, or other obstruction, the man at the bow heaves the lead and sings out, "By the mark, three," "Mark twain," etc.—meaning three fathoms deep, two fathoms, and so on. The thought of adopting Mark Twain as a *nom de guerre* was not original with Clemens; but the world owes him a debt of gratitude for making forever famous a name that, but for him, would have been forever lost. "There was a man, Captain Isaiah Sellers, who furnished river news for the New Orleans *Picayune*, still one of the best papers in the South," Mr. Clemens once confessed to Professor Wm. L. Phelps. "He used to sign his articles *Mark Twain*. He died in 1863. I liked the name, and stole it. I think I have done him no wrong, for I seem to have made this name somewhat generally known."

The inglorious escapade of his military career, at which he himself has poked unspeakable fun, and for which not even his most enthusiastic biographers have any excuse, was soon ended. Had his heart really been enlisted on the side of the South, he would doubtless have stayed at his post. In reality, he was at that time lacking in conviction; and in after life he became a thorough Unionist and Abolitionist. In the summer of 1861, Governor Jackson of Missouri called for fifty thousand volunteers to drive out the Union forces. While visiting in the small town where his boyhood had been spent, Hannibal, Marion County, young Clemens and some of his friends met together in a secret place one night, and formed themselves into a military company. The spirited but untrained Tom Lyman was made captain; and in lieu of a first lieutenant—strange omission!—young Clemens was made second lieutenant. These fifteen hardy souls proudly dubbed themselves the Marion Rangers. No one thought of finding fault with such a name—it sounded too well. All were full of notions as high-flown as the name of their company. One of their number, named Dunlap, was ashamed of his name, because it had a plebeian sound to his ear. So he solved the difficulty and gratified his aristocratic ambitions by writing it *d'Unlap*. This may serve as a sample of the stuff of which the company was made. Dunlap was by no means useless; for he invented hifalutin names for the camps, and generally succeeded in proposing a name that was, as his companions agreed, "no slouch."

There was no real organization, nobody obeyed orders, there was never a battle. They retreated, according to the tale of the humorist, at every sign of the enemy. In truth, this little band had plenty of stomach for fighting, despite its loose organization; and quite a number fought all through the war. Mark Twain is doubtless correct in the main, in his assertion that he has not given an unfair picture of the conditions prevailing in many of the militia camps in the first months of the war between the states. The men were raw and unseasoned, and even the leaders were lacking in the rudiments of military training and discipline. The situation was strange and unprecedented, the terrors were none the less real that they were imaginary. As Mark says, it took an actual collision with the enemy on the field of battle to change them from rabbits into soldiers. Young Clemens, according to his nephew's account, was first detailed to special duty on the river because of his knowledge acquired as a pilot; it was not long before he was captured and paroled. Again he was captured, this time sent to St. Louis, and imprisoned there in a tobacco warehouse. Fearing recognition and tragic consequences, perhaps court-martial and death, should he, during the formalities of exchange, be recognized by the command in Grant's army which first captured him, he made his escape, abandoned the cause which he afterwards spoke of as "the rebellion," and went west as secretary to his brother Orion, lately appointed Territorial Secretary of Nevada by the President.

A very credible and interesting biography of Mark Twain might be compiled from his own works;

and *Roughing It* is full of autobiography of a coloured sort, though in the main correct. His joy in the prospect of that trip, the exciting details of the long journey, are all narrated with gusto and fine effect. In the "unique sinecure" of the office of private secretary, he found he had nothing to do and no salary; so after a short time—the fear of being recognized by Union soldiers and shot for breaking his parole still haunting him—he, and a companion, went off together on a fishing jaunt to Lake Tahoe. Everywhere he saw fortunes made in a moment. He fell a prey to the prevailing excitement and went mad like all the rest. Little wonder over the wild talk, when cartloads of solid silver bricks as large as pigs of lead were passing by every day before their very eyes. The wild talk grew more frenzied from day to day. And young Clemens yielded to no one in enthusiasm and excitement. For vividness or picturesqueness of expression none could vie with him. With three companions, he began "prospecting," with the most indifferent success; and soon tiring of their situation, they moved on down to Esmeralda (now Aurora), on the other side of Carson City. Here new life seemed to inspire the party. What mattered it if they *were* in debt to the butcher—for did they not own thirty thousand feet apiece in the " richest mines on earth " ! Who cared if their credit was *not* good with the grocer, so long as they revelled in mountains of fictitious wealth and raved in the frenzied cant of the hour over their immediate prospect of fabulous riches ! But at last the practical necessities of living put a sudden damper on their enthusiasm. Clemens was forced at last to abandon mining, and go to work as a common labourer in a quartz mill, at ten dollars a week and board—after flour had soared to a dollar a pound and the rate on borrowed money had gone to eight per cent. a month. This work was very exhausting, and after a week Clemens asked his employer for an advance of wages. The employer replied that he was paying Clemens ten dollars a week, and thought that all he was worth. How much did he want ? When Clemens replied that four hundred thousand dollars a month, and board, was all he could reasonably ask, considering the hard times, he was ordered off the premises ! In after days, Mark only regretted that, in view of the arduous labours he had performed in that mill, he had not asked *seven* hundred thousand for his services !

After a time, Mark and his friend Higbie established their claim to a mine, became mad with excitement, and indulged in the wildest dreams for the future. Under the laws of the district, work of a certain character must be done upon the claim within ten days after location in order to establish the right of possession. Mark was called away to the bedside of a sick friend, Higbie failed to receive Mark's note, and the work was never done—each thinking it was being properly attended to by the other. On their return, they discovered that their claim was "re-located," and that millions had slipped from their grasp! The very stars in their courses seemed to fight to force young Clemens into literature. Had Samuel Clemens become a millionaire at this time, it is virtually certain that there would have been no Mark Twain.

After one day more of heartless prospecting, Clemens "dropped in" at the wayside post-office. It was the hour of fate! A letter awaited him there. We cannot call it accident—it was the result of forces and events which had long been converging toward this end. Samuel Clemens began his career as an itinerant, tramping "jour" printer. He wrote for the papers on which he served as printer; and he actually read the matter he set up in type. By observation on his travels, by study of the writing of others, Clemens acquired information, knowledge of life, and ingenuity of expression. He hadn't served his ten-years' apprenticeship as a printer for nothing. In the process of setting up tons of good and bad literature, he had learned—half unconsciously—to appraise and to discriminate. In the same half-unconscious way, he was actually gaining some inkling of the niceties of style. After he began "learning the river," Clemens once wrote a funny sketch about Captain Sellers which made a genuine "hit" with the officers on the boat. The sketch fell into the hands of the "river-editor" of the *St. Louis Republican,* found a place in that journal, and was widely copied throughout the West. On the strength of it, Clemens became a sort of river reporter, and from time to time published memoranda and comic squibs in the *Republican.* That passion which a French critic has characterized as distinctively American, the passion for "seeing yourself in print," still burned in Clemens, even during all the hardships of prospecting and milling. At intervals he sent from the mining regions of "Washoe," as all that part of Nevada was then called, humorous letters signed "Josh" to the *Daily Territorial Enterprise* of Virginia City, at that time one of the most progressive and wide-awake newspapers in the West.

The fateful letter which I have mentioned, contained an offer to Clemens from the proprietor of the *Enterprise*, of the position of city editor, at a salary of twenty-five dollars a week. To Clemens at this time, this offer came as a perfect godsend. Twenty-five dollars a week was nothing short of wealth, luxury. His enthusiasm oozed away when he reflected over his ignorance and incompetence; and he gloomily recalled his repeated failures. But necessity faced him; and opportunity knocks but once at every door. His doubts were speedily resolved; and he afterwards confessed that, had he been offered at that time a salary to translate the Talmud from the original Hebrew, he would unhesitatingly have accepted, despite some natural misgivings, and have tried to throw as much variety into it as he could for the money. It was to fill a vacancy, caused by the absence of Dan De Quille, the regular reporter, on a visit to "the States," that Clemens was offered this position; but he retained it after De Quille returned. "Mark and I had our hands full," relates De Quille, "and no grass grew under our feet. There was a constant rush of startling events; they came tumbling over one another as though playing at leap-frog. While a stage robbery was being written up, a shooting affray started; and perhaps before the pistol shots had ceased to echo among the surrounding hills, the firebells were banging out an alarm." A record of the variegated duties of these two, found in an old copy of the *Territorial Enterprise* of 1863, bears the unmistakable hallmarks of Mark Twain. "Our duty is to keep the universe thoroughly posted concerning murders and street fights, and balls and theatres, and pack-trains, and churches, and lectures, and school-houses, and city military affairs, and highway robberies, and Bible societies, and hay wagons, and the thousand other things which it is within the province of local reporters to keep track of and magnify into undue importance for the instruction of the readers of a great daily newspaper. Beyond this revelation everything connected with these two experiments of Providence must for ever remain an impenetrable mystery." An admirable picture of Mark Twain on his native heath, in the latter part of 1863, is given by Edward Peron Hingston, author of *The Genial Showman*, in the introduction to the English edition of *The Innocents Abroad*.

The fame of the Western humorist had already reached the ears of Hingston; and as soon as he reached Virginia City, he went to the office of the *Territorial Enterprise* and asked to be presented to Mark Twain.

When he heard his name called by some one, Clemens called out:

"Pass the gentleman into my den. The noble animal is here."

The noble animal proved to be "a young man, strongly built, ruddy in complexion, his hair of a sunny hue, his eyes light and twinkling, in manner hearty, and nothing of the student about him—one who looked as if he could take his own part in a quarrel, strike a smart blow as readily as he could say a telling thing, bluffly jolly, brusquely cordial, off-handedly good-natured." The picture is detailed and vivid:—

> "Let it be borne in mind that from the windows of the newspaper office the American desert was visible; that within a radius of ten miles Indians were encamping amongst the sage-brush; that the whole city was populated with miners, adventurers, Jew traders, gamblers, and all the rough-and-tumble class which a mining town in a new territory collects together, and it will be readily understood that a reporter for a daily paper in such a place must neither go about his duties wearing light kid gloves, nor be fastidious about having gilt edges to his note-books. In Mark Twain I found the very man I had expected to see—a flower of the wilderness, tinged with the colour of the soil, the man of thought and the man of action rolled into one, humorist and hard-worker, Momus in a felt hat and jack-boots. In the reporter of the *Territorial Enterprise* I became introduced to a Californian celebrity, rich in eccentricities of thought, lively in fancy, quaint in remark, whose residence upon the fringe of civilization had allowed his

humour to develop without restraint, and his speech to be rarely idiomatic."

Under the influence of the example of the proprietors of the *Enterprise*, strict stylistic disciplinarians of the Dana school of journalism, Clemens learned the advantages of the crisp, direct style which characterizes his writing. As a reporter, he was really industrious in matters that met his fancy; but "cast-iron items"—for he hated facts and figures requiring absolute accuracy—got from him only "a lick and a promise." He was much interested in Tom Fitch's effort to establish a literary journal, *The Weekly Occidental*. Daggett's opening chapters of a wonderful story, of which Fitch, Mrs Fitch, J. T. Goodman, Dan De Quille, and Clemens were to write successive instalments, gave that paper the *coup de grâce* in its very first issue. Of this wonderful novel, at the close of each instalment of which the "hero was left in a position of such peril that it seemed impossible he could be rescued, except through means and wisdom more than human"; of the Bohemian days of the "Visigoths," —Clemens, De Quille, Frank May, Louis Aldrich, and their *confrères*; of the practical jokes played on each other, particularly the incident of the imitation meerschaum ("mere sham") pipe, solemnly presented to Clemens by Steve Gillis, C. A. V. Putnam, D. E. M^cCarthy, De Quille and others—all these belong to the fascinating domain of the biographer. When Clemens was sent down to Carson City to report the meetings of the first Nevada Legislature, he began for the first time to sign his letters "Mark Twain." In his *Autobiography* he has explained that his function as a legislative correspondent was to dispense compliment and censure with impartial justice. As his disquisitions covered about half a page each morning in the *Enterprise*, it is easy to understand that he was an "influence." Questioned by Carlyle Smith in regard to his choice of "Mark Twain," Mr. Clemens replied: "I chose my pseudonym because to nine hundred and ninety-nine persons out of a thousand it had no meaning, and also because it was short. I was a reporter in the Legislature at the time, and I wished to save the Legislature time. It was much shorter to say in their debates—for I was certain to be the occasion of some questions of privilege—'Mark Twain' than 'the unprincipled and lying Parliamentary Reporter of the *Territorial Enterprise.*'"

Already his name was known the whole length of the Pacific Coast; the *Enterprise* published many things from his pen which gave him local, and afterwards national, fame; such sketches as *The Undertaker's Chat*, *The Petrified Man* and *The Marvellous 'Bloody Massacre'* had attracted favourable and wide notice east of the Rocky Mountains. But his career in Carson City came to a sudden close when he challenged the editor of the Virginia *Union* to a duel, the bloodless conclusion of which is narrated in the *Autobiography*. But even a challenge to a duel was against the new law of Nevada; and obeying the warning of Governor North, the duellists crossed the border without ceremony, and stood not upon the order of their going.

While Mark Twain was still with the *Enterprise*, he was in the habit of reserving all his "sketches" for the San Francisco newspapers, the *Golden Era* and the *Morning Call*. He now turns his steps to that storied city of "Frisco," and was not long in extending his fame on that coast. He was incorrigibly lazy, as George Barnes, the editor of the *Call*, soon discovered; and Kipling was told when he was in San Francisco that Mark was in the habit of coiling himself into a heap and meditating until the last minute, when he would produce copy having no relationship to the subject of his assignment—"which made the editor swear horribly, and the readers of *The Call* ask for more." His love for practical joking during the California days brought him unpopularity; and one reads in a San Francisco paper of the early days: "There have been moments in the lives of various kind-hearted and respectable citizens of California and Nevada, when, if Mark Twain were before them as members of a vigilance committee for any mild crime, such as mule-stealing or arson, it is to be feared his shrift would have been short. What a dramatic picture the idea conjures up, to be sure! Mark, before these honest men, infuriated by his practical jokes, trying to show them what an innocent creature he was when it came to mules, or how the only policy of fire insurance he held had lapsed, how void of guile he was in any direction, and all with that inimitable drawl, that perplexed countenance and peculiar scraping of the left foot, like a boy speaking his first piece at school." If he just escaped disaster, he likewise just escaped millions; on one occasion, for the space of a few moments, he owned the famous Comstock Lode, which was, though he never suspected it, worth millions. His trunkful of securities, which were eminently saleable at one time, proved to be of fictitious value when "the bottom dropped out" of the Nevada boom; and that silver mine, which he was commissioned to sell in New York, was finally sold for three million dollars! It was, as Mark says, the blind lead over again. Mark Twain had the true Midas touch; but the mine of riches he was destined to discover was a mine, not of gold or silver, but the mine of intellect and rich human experience.

To *The Golden Era*, Mark Twain, like Prentice Mulford and Joaquin Miller, contributed freely; and after a time he became associated with Bret Harte on *The Californian*, Harte as editor at twenty dollars a week, and Mark receiving twelve dollars for an article. Here forgathered that group of brilliant writers of the Pacific Slope, numbering Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Charles Warren Stoddard, Charles Henry Webb, and Prentice Mulford among its celebrities; two of that remarkable coterie were soon destined to achieve world-wide fame. "These ingenuous young men, with the fatuity of gifted people," says Mr. Howells, "had established a literary newspaper in San Francisco, and they brilliantly co-operated in its early extinction." Of his first meeting with Mark Twain, Bret Harte has left a memorable picture:—

> "His head was striking. He had the curly hair, the aquiline nose, and even the aquiline eye—an eye so eagle-like that a second lid would not have surprised me—of an

unusual and dominant nature. His eyebrows were very thick and bushy. His dress was careless, and his general manner was one of supreme indifference to surroundings and circumstances. Barnes introduced him as Mr. Sam Clemens, and remarked that he had shown a very unusual talent in a number of newspaper articles contributed over the signature of 'Mark Twain.'"

Mark tired of the life of literary drudgery in San Francisco—on one occasion he was reduced to a solitary ten-cent piece; and General John M^{c}Comb wooed him back to journalism just as he was on the point of returning to his old work on the Mississippi River, this time as a Government pilot. During the earlier years in San Francisco, he was in the habit of writing weekly letters to the *Territorial Enterprise*—personals, market-chat, and the like. But when he criticized the police department of San Francisco in the most scathing terms, the officials "found means for bringing charges that made the author's presence there difficult and comfortless." So he welcomed the opportunity to join Steve Gillis in a pilgrimage to the mountain home of Jim Gillis, his brother—a "sort of Bohemian infirmary." Mark Twain revelled in the delightful company of the original of Bret Harte's "Truthful James," and he enjoyed the mining methods of Jackass Hill, like the true Bohemian that he was. Soon after his arrival, Mark and Jim Gillis started out in search of golden pockets. As De Quille says :—

> "They soon found and spent some days in working up the undisturbed trail of an undiscovered deposit. They were on the 'golden bee-line' and stuck to it faithfully, though it was necessary to carry each sample of dirt a considerable distance to a small stream in the bed of a cañon in order to wash it. However, Mark hungered and thirsted to find a big rich pocket, and he pitched in after the manner of Joe Bowers of old—just like a thousand of brick.
>
> "Each step made sure by the finding of golden grains, they at last came upon the pocket whence these grains had trailed out down the slope of the mountain. It was a cold, dreary drizzling day when the 'home deposit' was found. The first sample of dirt carried to the stream and washed out yielded only a few cents. Although the right vein had been discovered, they had as yet found only the tail end of the pocket.
>
> "Returning to the vein, they dug a sample of the decomposed ore from a new place, and were about to carry it down to the ravine and test it, when the rain increased to a lively downpour."

Mark was chilled to the bone, and refused to carry another pail of water. In slow, drawling tones he protested decisively :

"Jim, I won't carry any more water. This work is too disagreeable. Let's go to the house and wait till it clears up."

Gillis was eager to test the sample he had just taken out.

"Bring just one more pail, Sam," he urged.

"I won't do it, Jim!" replied the now thoroughly disgusted Clemens. “Not a drop! Not if I knew there were a million dollars in that pan!”

Moved by Sam’s dejected appearance—blue nose and humped back—and realizing doubtless that it was futile to reason with him further, Jim yielded—and emptied the sacks of dirt just dug upon the ground. They now started out for the nearest shelter, the hotel in Angel’s Camp, kept by Coon Drayton, formerly a Mississippi River pilot. Imagine the jests and shouts that went around as Mark and Coon vied with each other in narrating interesting experiences. For three days the rain and the stories held out; and among those told by Drayton was a story of a frog. He narrated this story with the utmost solemnity as a thing that had happened in Angel’s Camp in the spring of ’49—the story of a frog trained by its owner to become a wonderful jumper, but which failed to “make good” in a contest because the owner of a rival frog, in order to secure the winning of the wager, filled the trained frog full of shot during its owner’s absence. This story appealed irresistibly to Mark as a first-rate story told in a first-rate way; he divined in it the magic quality unsuspected by the narrator—universal humour. He made notes in order to remember the story, and on his return to the Gillis’ cabin, “wrote it up." He wrote a number of other things besides, all of which he valued above the frog story; but Gillis thought it the best thing he had ever written.

Meantime the rain had washed off the surface soil from their last pan, which they had left in their hurry. Some passing miners were astonished to behold the ground glittering with gold; they appropriated it, but dared not molest the deposit until the expiration of the thirty-day claim-notice posted by Jim Gillis. They sat down to wait, hoping that the claimants would not return. At the expiration of the thirty days, the claim-jumpers took possession, and soon cleared out the pocket, which yielded twenty thousand dollars. It was one of the most fortunate accidents in Mark Twain's career. He came within one pail of water of comparative wealth; but had he discovered that pocket, he would probably have settled down as a pocket-miner, and might have pounded quartz for the rest of his life. Had his nerve held out a moment longer, he would never have gone to Angel's Camp, would never have heard *The Story of the Jumping Frog*, and would have escaped that sudden fame which this little story soon brought him.

On his return to San Francisco, he dropped in one morning to see Bret Harte, and told him this story. As Harte records:

> "He spoke in a slow, rather satirical drawl, which was in itself irresistible. He went on to tell one of those extravagant stories, and half-unconsciously dropped into the lazy tone and manner of the original narrator. I asked him to tell it again to a friend who came in, and they asked him to write it for *The Californian.* He did so, and when published it was an emphatic success. It was the first work of his that had attracted general attention, and it crossed the Sierras for an Eastern reading. The story was 'The Jumping Frog of Calaveras.' It is now known and laughed over, I suppose, wherever the English language is spoken; but it will never be as funny to anyone in print as it was to me, told for the first time, by the unknown Twain himself, on that morning in the San Francisco Mint."

When Artemus Ward passed through California on a literary tour in 1864, Mark Twain regaled him — as he regaled all worthy acquaintances— with his favourite story, *The Jumping Frog.* Ward was delighted with it.

"Write it out," he said, "give it all the necessary touches, and let me use it in a volume of sketches I am preparing for the press. Just send it to Carleton, my publisher, in New York."

It arrived too late for Ward's book, and Carleton presented it to Henry Clapp, who published it in his paper, *The Saturday Press* of November 18, 1864. In his *Autobiography*, Mr. Clemens has narrated how *The Jumping Frog* put a quietus on *The Saturday Press*, and was immediately copied in numerous newspapers in England and America. He was always proud of the celebrity that story achieved; but he never sought to claim the credit for himself. He freely admits that it was not Mark Twain, but the frog, that became celebrated. The author, alas, remained in obscurity!

Carleton afterwards confessed that he had lost the chance of a life-time by giving *The Jumping Frog* away; but Mark Twain's old friend, Charles Henry Webb, came to the rescue and published it. About four thousand copies were sold in three years; but the real fame of the story was in its newspaper and magazine notoriety. In 1872 it was translated into the *Revue des Deux Mondes*; and it was almost as widely read in England, India, and Australia as it was in America.

Meantime Mark Twain was still awaiting the rewards of journalism, and doing literary hack work of one sort or another. In 1866 the proprietors of the Sacramento *Union* employed him to write a series of letters from the Sandwich Islands. The purpose of these letters was to give an account of the sugar industry. Mark told the story of sugar, but, as was his wont, threw in a lot of extraneous matter that had nothing to do with sugar. It was the extraneous matter, and not the sugar, that won him a wide audience on the Pacific Coast. During these months of "luxurious vagrancy" he described in the most vivid way many of the most notable features of the Sandwich Islands. Nowadays such letters would at once have been embodied in a volume. In his *My Début as a Literary Person,* Mark Twain has described in admirably graphic style his great "scoop" of the news of the *Hornet* disaster; how Anson Burlingame had him, ill though he was, carried on a cot to the hospital, so that he could interview the half-dead sailors. His bill—twenty dollars a week for general correspondence, and *one hundred dollars a column* for the *Hornet* story—was paid with all good will. On the strength of this story, he hoped to become a "Literary Person," and sent his account of the *Hornet* disaster to *Harper's Magazine,* where it appeared in December, 1866. But alas! he could not give the banquet he was going to give to celebrate his *début* as a "Literary Person." He had not written the "Mark Twain" distinctly, and when it appeared it had been transformed into "Mike Swain"!

When Mark returned to San Francisco, he resolved to follow the example of Stoddard and Mulford, and "enter the lecture field." The "extraneous matter" in his letters to the *Sacramento Union* had made him "notorious"; and, as he put it, "San Francisco invited me to lecture." The historic account of that lecture, in *Roughing It*, is found elsewhere in this book. Noah Brooks, editor of the *Alta California*, who was present at this lecture, has written the following graphic piece of description: "Mark Twain's method as a lecturer was distinctly unique and novel. His slow, deliberate drawl, the anxious and perturbed expression of his visage, the apparently painful effort with which he framed his sentences, and, above all, the surprise that spread over his face when the audience roared with delight or rapturously applauded the finer passages of his word-painting, were unlike anything of the kind they had ever known. All this was original; it was Mark Twain." Employing D. E. McCarthy as his agent, Mark gave a number of lectures at various places on the Pacific Coast. From this time forward we recognize in Mark Twain one of the supreme masters of the art of lecturing in our time.

In December, 1866, he set out for New York, preparatory to the *grand tour* around the world. His own account of the circular describing the projected trip is famous. He had proposed, for twelve hundred dollars in gold,—at the rate of twenty dollars apiece,—to write a series of letters for the *Alta California.* Brooks, the editor, fortified the grave misgivings of the proprietors over this proposition; but Colonel John M^cComb (then on the editorial staff) argued vehemently for Mark, and turned the scale in his favour. While Mark was in New York, he was urged by Frank Fuller, whom he had known as Territorial Governor of Utah, to deliver a lecture—in order to establish his reputation on the Atlantic coast. Fuller, an enthusiastic admirer of Mark Twain, overcame all objections, and engaged Cooper Union for the occasion. Though few tickets were sold, Fuller cleverly succeeded in packing the hall by sending out a multitude of complimentary tickets to the school-teachers of New York City and the adjacent territory. That lecture proved to be a supreme success—Mark's reputation as a lecturer on the Atlantic coast was assured.

On June 10, 1867, the *Quaker City* set sail for its Oriental tour. It bore on board a comparatively unknown person of the name of Clemens, who, in applying for passage, represented himself to be a Baptist minister in ill-health from San Francisco!

It brought back a celebrity, destined to become famous throughout the world. Prior to sailing he arranged to contribute letters to the *New York Tribune* and the *New York Herald,* as well as to the *Alta California.*

" His letters to the *Alta California,*" says Noah Brooks, " made him famous. It was my business to prepare one of these letters for the Sunday morning paper, taking the topmost letter from a goodly pile that was stacked in a pigeon-hole of my desk. Clemens was an indefatigable correspondent, and his last letter was slipped in at the bottom of a tall stack.

" It would not be quite accurate to say that Mark Twain's letters were the talk of the town; but it was very rarely that readers of the paper did not come into the office on Mondays to confide to the editors their admiration of the writer, and their enjoyment of his weekly contributions. The California newspapers copied these letters, with unanimous approval and disregard of the copyrights of author and publisher."

It was the Western humour, and the quaintly untrammelled American intelligence, focussed upon diverse and age-encrusted civilizations, which caught the instantaneous fancy of a vast public. It was a virgin field for the humorous observer; Europe had not yet become the playground of America. It was rather a *terra incognita,* regarded with a sort of reverential ignorance by the average American tourist. By the range of his humour, the pertinency of his observation, and the vigour of his expression he awoke immediate attention. And he aroused a deeply sympathetic response in the hearts of Americans by his manly and outspoken expression—his respect for the worthy, the admirable, the praiseworthy, his scorn and detestation for the spurious, the specious and the fraudulent. In this book, for the first time, he strikes the key-note of his life and thought, which sounds so clearly throughout all his later works. It is the true beginning of his career.

On his return to the United States in November, he resumed his newspaper work, this time at the National Capital. On his arrival there he found a letter from Elisha Bliss, of the American Publishing Company, proposing a volume recounting the adventures of the "Excursion," to be elaborately illustrated, and sold by subscription on a five per cent. royalty. He eagerly accepted the offer and set to work on his notes.

"I knew Mark Twain in Washington," says

Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada, in his reminiscences *A Senator of the Sixties,* " at a time when he was without money. He told me his condition, and said he was very anxious to get out his book. He showed me his notes, and I saw that they would make a great book, and probably bring him in a fortune. I promised that I would ' stake ' him until he had the book written. I made him a clerk to my committee in the senate, which paid him six dollars per day; then I hired a man for one hundred dollars per month to do the work!" His mischievously extravagant description of Mark Twain at this time is eminently worthy of record: " He was arrayed in a seedy suit which hung upon his lean frame in bunches, with no style worth mentioning. A sheaf of scraggly, black hair leaked out of a battered, old, slouch hat, like stuffing from an ancient Colonial sofa, and an evil-smelling cigar butt, very much frazzled, protruded from the corner of his mouth. He had a very sinister appearance. He was a man I had known around the Nevada mining camps several years before, and his name was Samuel L. Clemens."

It was during this winter that Mark wrote a number of humorous articles and sketches—*The*

Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract, the account of his resignation as clerk of the Senate Committee on Conchology, and *Riley—Newspaper Correspondent.* His time was chiefly devoted to preparing the material for his book; but finding Washington too distracting, he returned to San Francisco and completed the manuscript there—in July, 1868. For a year the publication of the book was delayed, as recorded in the *Autobiography*; but it finally appeared in print following Mark's indignant telegram to Bliss that, if the book was not on sale in twenty-four hours, he would bring suit for damages. Mark Twain records that in nine months the book had taken the publishing house out of debt, advanced its stock from twenty-five to two hundred, and left seventy thousand dollars clear profit. Eighty-five thousand copies were sold within sixteen months, the largest sale of a four dollar book ever achieved in America in so short a time up to that date. It is, miraculous to relate, still the leader in its own special field—a "best-seller" for forty years!

The proprietors of the *Alta California* were exceeding wroth when they heard that Clemens was preparing for publication the very letters which they had commissioned him to write and had printed in their own paper. They prepared to publish a cheap paper-covered edition of the letters, and sent the American Publishing Co. a challenge in the shape of an advance notice of their publication. Clemens hurried back to San Francisco from the East, and soon convinced the proprietors of the *Alta California* of the authenticity of his copyright. The paper-covered edition was then and there abandoned—forever.

Before leaving the West to settle permanently in the East, Mark Twain was associated for a short time with the *Overland Monthly*, edited by Bret Harte. In his review of *The Innocents Abroad*, Harte asserted that Clemens deserved "to rank foremost among Western humorists"; but he was grievously disappointed in the first few contributions from Clemens to the *Overland Monthly*—notably *By Rail through France* (later incorporated in *The Innocents Abroad*)—because of their perfect gravity. At last, *A Mediæval Romance*—a story which has been said to contain the germ of *A Connecticut Yankee*, because of its burlesque of mediævalism—won the enthusiastic approval of Bret Harte.

From this time forward, Samuel L. Clemens is seen in a new environment, in association with new ideas and a new civilization. The history of this second period does not fall within the scope of the present work. It has just been narrated with brilliancy and charm by his close associate and most intimate friend, Mr. William Dean Howells, in his admirable book *My Mark Twain.* In the subsequent portion of the present work attention will be directed solely to those features of Mark Twain's life which have a direct bearing upon his career as a man of letters, and which throw into relief the progressive development of his genius.

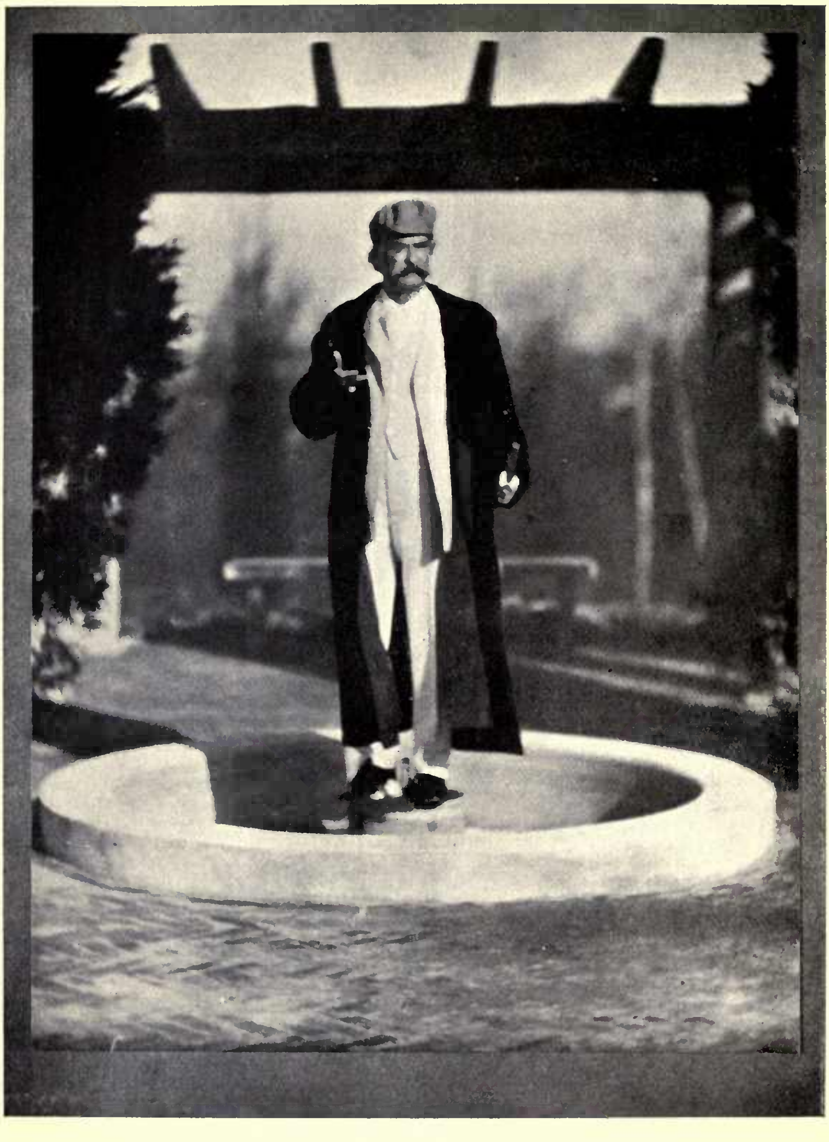
The South and the West contributed to Mark Twain's development, and added to his store of vital experience, in greater measure than all the other influences of his life combined. From the inexhaustible well of those experiences he drew ever fresh contributions for the satisfaction of the world. His mind was stocked with the rich, crude ore of early experience—the romance and the reality of a life full of prismatic variations of colour. The civilization of the East, its culture and refinement, tempered the genius of Mark Twain in conformity with the indispensable criteria of classic art. Under the broadening influence of its persistent nationalism, he became more deeply, more profoundly, imbued with the comprehensive ideals of American democracy. He never lost the first fine virginal spontaneity of his native style, never weakened in the vigour of his thought or in the primitiveness of his expression. His contact with the East compassed the liberation of that vast fund of stored-up early experiences, acquired through grappling with life in many a rude encounter.

Out of its own life, the East never contributed to Mark Twain's works, in any appreciably momentous way, either volume or immensity of fertile, suggestive human experience. If we eliminate from the list of Mark Twain's works those books which have their roots deep set in the soil of South and West, we eliminate the most priceless assets of his art. Indeed, it may be doubted whether, were those works struck from the catalogue of his contributions, Mark Twain could justly rank as a great genius. To his association with the South and the Southwest are due *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, and *Life on the Mississippi*. *The Jumping Frog* and *Roughing It* belong peculiarly to the West, and even *The Innocents Abroad* falls wholly within the period of Mark Twain's influence by the West, its standards, outlook, and localized viewpoint.

Colonel Mulberry Sellers is a veritably human type, the embodiment, laughably lovable, of a temperamental phase of American character in the course of the national development. But *The Gilded Age* has long since disappeared from that small but tremendously significant group of works which are tentatively destined to rank as classics. Much as I enjoy the satiric comedy of *A Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, I have always felt that it set before Europe an American type which is neither elevating nor inspiring—nor national. It tends to the gratification of England and Europe, even in the face of its democratic demolition of feudalistic survival, by sealing a certain cheap type of vulgarity with the national stamp. One must, nevertheless, confess with regret that this type is the embodiment of an "ideal" still only too commonly cherished in America. The national type, I take it, is found in such characters as Lincoln and Phillips Brooks, in Lee and Henry W. Grady, in Charles W. Eliot and Edwin A. Alderman, and not in a provincial Connecticut Yankee, jovial and whole-hearted though he be. I say this without forgetting or minimizing for a moment the art displayed in effecting the devastating and illimitably humorous contrast of a present with a remotely past civilization. *Joan* *of Arc* has no local association, being a pure work of the heart, the chivalric impulse of a noble spirit. *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg*, viewed from any standpoint, is a masterpiece ; but its significance lies, not in the locality of its setting, but in the universality of its moral.

In a word, it was the East which broadened and universalized the spirit of Mark Twain. We shall see, later on, that it steadily fostered in him a spirit of true nationalism and hardy democracy. But it was the South and the West which lavishly gave him of their most priceless riches, and thereby created in Mark Twain an unique and incomparable genius, the veritable type and embodiment of their inalienably individual life and civilization. This first phase of the life of Mark Twain has been so strongly stressed here, because the first half of his life has always seemed to me to have been a period of—shall I say ?—God-appointed preparation for the most significant and lastingly permanent work of the latter half, namely, the narration of the incidents of early experience, and the imaginative reminting of the gold of that experience.

One has only to read Mark Twain's works to learn the real history of his life. There were momentous episodes in the latter half of his career; but they were concerned with his life rather than with his art. We cannot, indeed, say what or how profound is the effect of life and experience on art. There was the happy marriage, the tragic losses of wife and children. There were the associations with the culture and art-circles of America and Europe—New England, New York, Berlin, Vienna, London, Glasgow; the academic degrees—Missouri, Yale; finally ancient Oxford for the first time conferring the coveted honour of its degree upon a humorist; the honours his own country delighted to bestow upon him. And there too was that gallant struggle to pay off a tremendous debt, begun at sixty—and accomplished one year sooner than he expected—after the most spectacular and remarkable lecture tour in history. The beautiful chivalric spirit of this great soul shone brightest in disaster. He insisted that it was his wife who refused to compromise his debts for forty cents on the dollar—that it was she who declared it must be dollar for dollar; and when a fund was raised by his admirers to assist in lightening his burden, that it was his wife who refused to accept it, though he was willing enough to accept it as a welcome relief.



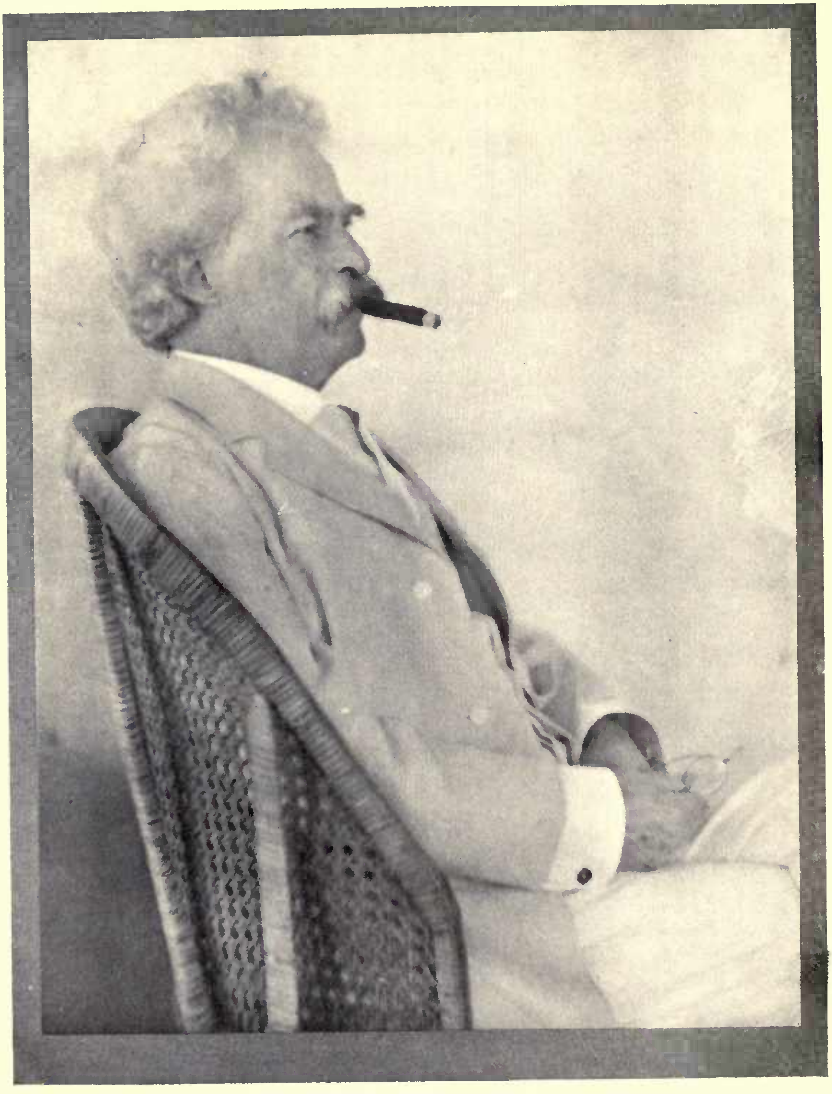
As an American, I can say nothing more significantly characteristic of the man than that he was a *good citizen.* He possessed in rich measure the consciousness of personal responsibility for the standards, government, and ideals of his town, his city, and his country. Civic conscientiousness burned strong within him; and he fought to develop and to maintain breadth of public view and sanity of popular ideals. Blind patriotism was impossible for this great American: he exposed the shallowness of popular enthusiasms and the narrowness of rampant spread-eagleism, without regard for consequence to himself or his popularity. What a tribute to his personality that, instead of suffering, he gained in popularity by his honest and downright outspokenness! He wielded the lash of his bitter scorn and fearful irony upon the wrong-doer, the hypocrite, the fraud; and aroused public opinion to impatience with public abuse, open offence, and official discourtesy.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens impressed me as the most complete and human individual I have ever known. He was not a great thinker; his views were not "advanced." The glory of his temperament was its splendid sanity, balance, and normality. The homeliest virtues of life were his—

the republican virtue of simplicity; the domestic virtue of personal purity and passionately simple regard for the sanctity of the marriage bond; the civic virtue of public honesty; the business virtue of stainless private honour. Mark Twain was one of the supreme literary geniuses of his time. But he was something even more than this. He was not simply a great genius: he was a great man.

III. THE HUMORIST

> "Exhilaration can be infinite, like sorrow; a joke can be so big that it breaks the roof of the stars. By simply going on being absurd, a thing can become godlike; there is but one step from the ridiculous to the sublime."
>
> GILBERT K. CHESTERTON: *Charles Dickens.*



THE HUMORIST

Not without wide significance in its bearing upon the general outlines of contemporary literature is the circumstance that Mark Twain served his apprenticeship to letters in the high school of journalism. Like his contemporaries, Artemus Ward and Bret Harte, he first found free play for his comic *intransigéance* in the broad freedom of the journal for the masses. Brilliant as he was, Artemus Ward seemed most effective only when he spoke in weird vernacular through the grotesque mouthpiece of his own invention. Bret Harte sacrificed more and more of the native flavour of his genius in his progressive preoccupation with the more sophisticated refinements of the purely literary. Mark Twain never lost the ruddy glow of his first inspiration, and his style, to the very end, remained as it began—journalistic, untamed, primitive.

Both Rudyard Kipling and Bernard Shaw, who like Mark Twain have achieved comprehensive international reputations, have succeeded in preserving the early vigour and telling directness acquired in journalistic apprenticeship. It was by the crude, almost barbaric, cry of his journalese that Rudyard Kipling awoke the world with a start. That trenchant and forthright style which imparts such an air of heightened verisimilitude to his plays, Bernard Shaw acquired in the ranks of the new journalism. "The writer who aims at producing the platitudes which are 'not for an age, but for all time,'" says Bernard Shaw, "has his reward in being unreadable in all ages; whilst Plato and Aristophanes trying to knock some sense into the Athens of their day, Shakespeare peopling that same Athens with Elizabethan mechanics and Warwickshire hunts, Ibsen photographing the local doctors and vestrymen of a Norwegian parish, Carpaccio painting the life of St. Ursula exactly as if she were a lady living in the next street to him, are still alive and at home everywhere among the dust and ashes of many thousands of academic, punctilious, most archæologically correct men of letters and art who spent their lives haughtily avoiding the journalists' vulgar obsession with the ephemeral." Mark Twain began his career by studying the people and period he knew in relation to his own life. Jamestown, Hannibal, and Virginia City, the stately Mississippi, and the orgiastic, uproarious life of Western prairie, mountain, and gulch start to life and live again in the pages of his books. Colonel Sellers, in the main correct but "stretched a little" here and there; Tom Sawyer, the "magerful" hero of boyhood; the shrewd and kindly Aunt Polly, drawn from his own mother; Huck Finn, with the tender conscience and the gentle heart—these and many another were drawn from the very life. In writing of his time *à propos* of himself, Mark Twain succeeded in telling the truth about humanity in general and for any time.

In the main—though there are noteworthy exceptions—Mark Twain's works originated fundamentally in the facts of his own life. He is a master humorist—which is only another way of saying that he is a master psychologist with the added gift of humour—because he looked upon himself always as a complete and well-rounded repository of universally human characteristics. *Humanus sum; et nil humanum mihi alienum est*—this might well have served for his motto. It was his conviction that the American possessed no unique and peculiar human characteristics differentiating him from the rest of the world. In the same way, he regarded himself as possessing no unique or peculiar human characteristics differentiating him from the rest of the human race. Like Omar he might have said: "I myself am Heaven and Hell"—for within himself he recognized, in some form, at higher or lower power, every feature, trait, instinct, characteristic of which a human being is capable. The last half century of his life, as he himself said in his *Autobiography*, had been constantly and faithfully devoted to the study of the human race. His knowledge came from minute self-examination—for he regarded himself as the entire human race compacted together. It was by concentrating his attention upon himself, by recognizing in himself the quintessential type of the race, that he succeeded in producing works of such pure naturalness and utter verity. A humour which is at bottom good humour is always contagious; but there is a deeper and more universal appeal which springs from genial and unaffected representation of the human species, of the universal *Genus Homo.*

It has been said, by foreign critics, that the intellectual life of America in general takes its cue from the day, whilst the intellectual life of Europe derives from history. If American literature be really "Journalism under exceptionally favourable conditions," as defined by the Danish critic, Johannes V. Jensen, then must Mark Twain be a typical product of American literature. A certain modicum of truth may rest in this startling and seemingly uncomplimentary definition. Interpreted liberally, it may be taken to mean that America finds her key to the future in the immediate vital present, rather than in a remote and hazy past. Mark Twain was a great creative genius because he saw himself, and so saw human nature, in the strong, searching light of the living present. He is the greatest genius evolved by natural selection out of the ranks of American journalism. Crude, rudimentary and boisterous as his early writing was, at times provincial and coarse, it bore upon its face the fresh stamp of contemporary actuality.

To the American of to-day, it is not a little exasperating to be placidly assured by our British critics that America is sublimely unconscious that her childhood is gone. And this gay paradox is less arresting than the asseveration that America is lacking in humour because she is lacking in self-knowledge. There is a certain grimly comic irony in this commiseration with us, on the part of our British critics, for our failure joyously to realize our old age, which they would have us believe is a sort of premature senescence and decay. The

New World is pitied for her failure to know without illusion the futility of the hurried pursuit of wealth, of the passion for extravagant opulence and inordinate display, of all the hostages youth in America eternally gives to old age. "America has produced great artists," admits Mr. Gilbert Chesterton. Yet he maintains that "that fact most certainly proves that she is full of a fine futility and the end of all things. Whatever the American men of genius are, they are not young gods making a young world. Is the art of Whistler a brave, barbaric art, happy and headlong? Does Mr. Henry James infect us with the spirit of a schoolboy? . . . Out of America has come a sweet and startling cry, as unmistakable as the cry of a dying man." This sweet and startling cry is less startling than the obvious reflection that Mr. Chesterton has chosen to illustrate his ludicrous paradox, the two American geniuses who have lived outside their own country, absorbed the art ideals of the older, more sophisticated civilizations, and lost touch with the youthful spirit, the still almost barbaric violence, the ongoing rush and progress of America. It is worthy of remark that Mr. James has always maintained that Mark Twain was capable of amusing only very primitive persons; and Whistler, with his acid *diablerie*, was wholly alien in spirit to the boisterous humour of Mark Twain. That other brilliant but incoherent interpreter of American life, Mr. Charles Whibley, bound to the presupposed paradox of America's pathetic senescence and total deficiency in humour, blithely gives away his case in the vehement assertion that America's greatest national interpreter is—Mark Twain!

To the general, Mark Twain is, first and foremost and exclusively, the humorist—with his shrieking Philistinism, his dominant sense for the colossally incongruous, his spontaneous faculty for staggering, ludicrous contrast. To the reflective, Mark Twain subsumed within himself a "certain surcharge and overplus of power, a buoyancy, and a sense of conquest" which typified the youth of America. It is memorable that he breathed in his youth the bracing air of the prairie, shared the collective ardour of the Argonauts, felt the rising thrill of Western adventure, and expressed the crude and manly energy of navigation, exploration, and the daring hazard for new fortune. To those who knew him in personal intimacy, the quality that was outstanding, omnipresent and eternally ineradicable from his nature was—paradoxical as it may sound—not humour, not wit, not irony, not a thousand other terms that might be associated with his name, but

—the spirit of eternal youth. It is comprehensively significant and conclusive that, to the day of her death, Mrs. Clemens never called her husband anything but the bright nickname—" Youth." Mark Twain is great as humorist, admirable as teller of tales, pungent as stylist. But he has achieved another sort of eminence that is peculiarly gratifying to Americans. " They distinguish in his writings," says an acute French critic, " exalted and sublimated by his genius, their national qualities of youth and of gaiety, of force and of faith ; they love his philosophy, at once practical and high-minded. They are fond of his simple style, animated with verve and spice, thanks to which his work is accessible to every class of readers. They think he describes his contemporaries with such an art of distinguishing their essential traits, that he manages to evoke, to *create* even, characters and types of eternal verity. They profess for Mark Twain the same sort of vehement admiration that we have in France for Balzac."

Whilst Mark Twain has solemnly averred that humour is a subject which has never had much interest for him, it is nothing more than a commonplace to say that it is as a humorist, and as a humorist only, that the world seems to persist in regarding him. The philosophy of his early life was what George Meredith has aptly termed the "philosophy of the Broad Grin." Mr. Gilbert Chesterton once said that "American humour, neither unfathomably absurd like the French, nor sharp and sensible and full of the realities of life like the Scotch, is simply the humour of imagination. It consists in piling towers on towers and mountains on mountains; of heaping a joke up to the stars and extending it to the end of the world." This partial and somewhat conventional foreign conception of American humour is admirably descriptive of the cumulative and "sky-breaking" humour of the early Mark Twain. Then no exaggeration was too absurd for him, no phantasm too unreal, no climax too extreme.

The humour of that day was the humour bred of a barbaric freedom and a lawless, untrammelled life. Mark Twain grew up with a civilization but one remove from barbarism; supremacy in marksmanship was the arbiter of argument; the greatest joke was the discomfiture of a fellow-creature. In the laughter of these wild Westerners was something at once rustic and sanguinary. The refinements of art and civilization seemed effeminate, artificial, to these rude spirits, who laughed uproariously at one another, plotted dementedly in circumvention of each other's plans, and gloried in their defiance of both man and God. Deep in their hearts they cherished tenderness for woman, sympathy for the weak and the afflicted, and generosity indescribable. And yet they prided themselves upon their barbaric rusticity, glorying in a native cunning bred of their wild life and sharpened in the struggle for existence. What, after all, is *The Jumping Frog* but the elaborate narrative, in native vernacular, of a shrewd practical joke? As Mark Twain first heard it, this story was a solemn recital of an interesting incident in the life of Angel's Camp. It was Mark Twain who "created" the story: he endowed with the comic note of whimsicality that imaginative realization of *une chose vue*, which went round the world. The humour of rustic shrewdness in criticism of art, so elaborately exploited in *The Innocents Abroad*, was displayed, perhaps invented, by Mark Twain in the early journalistic days in San Francisco. In *The Golden Era* an excellent example is found in the following observations upon a celebrated painting of Samson and Delilah, then on exhibition in San Francisco:

"Now what is the first thing you see in looking at this picture down at the Bank Exchange? Is it the gleaming eye and fine face of Samson? or the muscular Philistine gazing furtively at the lovely Delilah? or is it the rich drapery? or is it the truth to nature in that pretty foot? No, sir. The first thing that catches the eye is the scissors at her feet. Them scissors is too modern; thar warn't no scissors like them in them days—by a d——d sight."

That was a brilliant and audacious conception, having the just proportion of sanguinary humour, embodied in Mark Twain's offer, during his lecture on the Sandwich Islands, to show his audience how the cannibals consume their food — if only some lady would lend him a live baby. There is the same wildly humorous tactlessness in the delicious anecdote of Higgins.

Higgins was a simple creature, who used to haul rock; and on the day Judge Bagley fell down the court-house steps and broke his neck, Higgins was commissioned to carry the body in his wagon to the house of Mrs. Bagley and break the news to her as gently as possible. When he arrived, he shouted until Mrs. Bagley came to the door, and then tactfully inquired if the *Widder* Bagley lived there! When she indignantly replied in the negative, he gently humoured her whim; and inquired next if Judge Bagley lived there. When she replied that he did, Higgins offered to bet that he didn't; and delicately inquired if the Judge were in. On being assured that he was not in at present, Higgins triumphantly exclaimed that he expected as much. Because—he had the old Judge curled up out there in the wagon; and when Mrs. Bagley saw him, she would doubtless admit that about all that could comfort the Judge now would be an *inquest*!

Mark Twain was so fond of this bloody and ghastly humour that, on one occasion, he utterly overreached himself and suffered serious consequences. In the words of his fellow-journalist, Dan De Quille:—

> Mark Twain was fond of manufacturing items of the horrible style, but on one occasion he overdid this business, and the disease worked its own cure. He wrote an account of a terrible murder, supposed to have occurred at "Dutch Nick's," a station on the Carson River, where Empire City now stands. He made a man cut his wife's throat and those of his nine children, after which diabolical deed the murderer mounted his horse, cut his own throat from ear to ear, rode to Carson City (a distance of three and a half miles) and fell dead in front of Peter Hopkins' saloon.
>
> All the California papers copied the item, and several made editorial comment upon it as being the most shocking occurrence of the kind ever known on the Pacific Coast. Of course rival Virginia City papers at once denounced the item as a "cruel and idiotic hoax." They showed how the publication of such "shocking and reckless falsehoods" disgraced and injured the State, and they made it as "sultry" as possible for the *Enterprise* and its "fool reporter."

When the California papers saw all this and found they had been sold, there was a howl from Siskiyou to San Diego. Some papers demanded the immediate discharge of the author of the item by the *Enterprise* proprietors. They said they would never quote another line from that paper while the reporter who wrote the shocking item remained on its force. All this worried Mark as I had never before seen him worried. Said he: "I am being burned alive on both sides of the mountains." We roomed together, and one night, when the persecution was hottest, he was so distressed that he could not sleep. He tossed, tumbled, and groaned aloud. So I set to work to comfort him. "Mark," said I, "never mind this bit of a gale, it will soon blow itself out. This item of yours will be remembered and talked about when all your other work is forgotten. The murder at Dutch Nick's will be quoted years from now as the big sell of these times."

Said Mark: "I believe you are right; I remember I once did a thing at home in Missouri, was caught at it, and worried almost to death. I was a mere lad, and was going to school in a little town where I had an uncle living. I at once left the town and did not return to it for three years. When I finally came back I found I was only remembered as 'the boy that played the trick on the schoolmaster.'"

Mark then told me the story, began to laugh over it, and from that moment "ceased to groan." He was not discharged, and in less than a month people everywhere were laughing and joking about the "murder at Dutch Nick's."

Out of that full, free Western life, with its tremendous hazards of fortune, its extravagant alternations from fabulous wealth to wretched poverty, its tremendous exaggerations and incredible contrasts, was evolved a humour as rugged, as mountainous, and as altitudinous as the conditions which gave it birth. Mark Twain may be said to have created, and made himself master of, this new and fantastic humour which, in its exaggeration and elaboration, was without a parallel in the history of humorous narration. At times it seemed little more than a sort of infectious and hilarious nonsense; but in reality it had behind it all the calculation of detail and elaboration. There was something in it of the volcanic, as if at the bursting forth of some pent-up force of primitive nature. It consisted in piling Pelion on Ossa, until the structure toppled over of its own weight and fell with a stentorian crash of laughter which echoed among the stars. Whenever Mark Twain conceived a humorous idea, he seemed capable of extracting from it infinite complications of successive and cumulative comedy. This humour seemed like the mental functionings of some mad, yet inevitably logical jester; it grew from more to more, from extravagance to extravagance, until reason itself tired and gave over. Such explosive stories as *How I edited an Agricultural Paper*, *A Genuine Mexican Plug*, the deciphering of the Horace Greeley correspondence, *The Facts in the Case of the Great Beef Contract*, and many another, as Mr. Chesterton has pointed out, have one tremendous essential of great art. "The excitement mounts up perpetually; they grow more and more comic, as a tragedy should grow more and more tragic. The rack, tragic or comic, goes round until something breaks inside a man. In tragedy it is his heart, or perhaps his stiff neck. In farce I do not quite know what it is—perhaps his funny-bone is dislocated; perhaps his skull is slightly cracked." Mark Twain's mountainous humour, of this early type, never contains the element of final surprise, of the sudden, the unexpected, the *imprévu.* We know what is coming, we surrender ourselves more and more to the mood of the narrator, holding ourselves in reserve until laughter, no longer to be restrained, bursts forth in a torrent of undignified and explosive mirth. Perhaps no better example can be given than the description of the sad fate of the camel in *A Tramp Abroad.*

In Syria, at the head-waters of the Jordan, this camel had got hold of his overcoat; and after he finished contemplating it as an article of apparel, he began to inspect it as an article of diet. In his inimitable manner, Mark describes the almost religious ecstasy of that camel as it devoured his overcoat piecemeal—first one sleeve, then the other, velvet collar, and finally the tails. All went well until the camel struck a batch of manuscript—containing some of Mark's humorous letters for the home papers. Their solid wisdom soon began to lie heavy on the camel's stomach: the jokes shook him until he began to gag and gasp, and finally he struck statements that not even a camel could swallow with impunity. He died in horrible agony; and Mark found on examination that the camel had choked to death on one of the mildest statements of fact that he had ever offered to a trusting public! Here Mark gradually works up to an anticipated climax by piling on effect after effect. Our risibility is excited almost as much by the anticipation of the climax as by the recital.

Admirable instances of the ludicrous incident, of the nonsensical recital, are found in the scene in *Huckleberry Finn* dealing with the performance of the King's Cameleopard or Royal Nonesuch, the address on the occasion of the dinner in honour of the seventieth anniversary of John Greenleaf Whittier (an historic failure), and the Turkish bath in *The Innocents Abroad.*

In this prison filled with hot air, an attendant sat him down by a tank of hot water and began to polish him all over with a coarse mitten. Soon Mark noticed a disagreeable smell, and realized that the more he was polished the worse he smelt. He urged the attendant to bury him without unnecessary delay, as it was obvious that he couldn't possibly "keep" long in such warm weather. But the phlegmatic attendant paid no attention to Mark's commands and continued to scrub with renewed vigour. Mark's consternation changed to alarm when he discovered that little cylinders, like macaroni, began to roll from under the mitten. They were too white to be dirt. He felt that he was gradually being pared down to a convenient size. Realizing that it would take hours for the attendant to trim him down to the proper size, Mark indignantly ordered him to bring a jackplane at once and get the matter over. To all his protests the attendant paid no attention at all.

In one of the earliest critical articles about Mark Twain, which appeared in *Appleton's Journal of Literature, Science and Art* for July 4, 1874, Mr. G. T. Ferris gives an excellent appreciation of his humour. "Of humour in its highest phase," he says, "perhaps Bret Harte may be accounted the most puissant master among our contemporary American writers. Of wit, we see next to none. Mark Twain, while lacking the subtilty and pathos of the other, has more breadth, variety, and ease. His sketches of life are arabesque in their strange combinations. Bits of bright, serious description, both of landscape and society, carry us along till suddenly we stumble on some master-stroke of grotesque and irresistible fun. He understands the value of repose in art. One tires of a page where every sentence sparkles with points, and the author is constantly attitudinizing for our amusement. We like to be betrayed into laughter as much in books as in real life. It is the unconscious, easy, careless gait of Mark Twain that makes his most potent charm. He seems always to be catering as much to his own enjoyment as to that of the public. He strolls along like a great rollicking schoolboy, bent on having a good time, and determined that his readers shall have it with him."

Mark Twain is the most daring of humorists. He takes his courage in his hands for the wildest flights of fancy. His humour is the caricature of situations, rather than of individuals; and he is not afraid to risk his characters in colossally ludicrous situations. His art reveals itself in choosing ludicrous situations which contain such a strong colouring of naturalness that one's sense of reality is not outraged, but titillated. Hence it is that his humour, in its earlier form, does not lend itself readily to quotation. His early humour is not epigrammatic, but cumulative and extensive. Each scene is a unit and must appear as such. Andrew Lang not inaptly catches the note of Mark Twain's earlier manner, when he speaks of his "almost Mephistophelean coolness, an unwearying search after the comic sides of serious subjects, after the mean possibilities of the sublime—these with a native sense of incongruities and a glorious vein of exaggeration."

Mark Twain began his career as a wag; he rejoiced in being a fun-maker. He discarded the weird spellings and crude punning of his American forerunners; his object was not play upon words, but play upon ideas. He offered his public, as Frank R. Stockton pointed out, the pure ore of fun. "If he puts his private mark on it, it will pass current; it does not require the mint stamp of the schools of humour. He is never afraid of being laughed at." Indeed, that is a large part of his stock-in-trade; for throughout his entire career, nothing seemed to give him so much pleasure—though it is one of the lowest forms of humour—as making fun of himself. In describing two monkeys that got into his room at Delhi, he said that when he awoke, one of them was before the glass brushing his hair, and the other one had his notebook, and was reading a page of humorous notes and crying. He didn't mind the one with the hair-brush; but the conduct of the other one cut him to the heart. He never forgave that monkey. His apostrophe, with tears, over the tomb of Adam—only to be fully appreciated in connexion with his satiric indignation over the drivel of the maudlin Mr. Grimes, who "never bored, but he struck water"—is an admirable example of the mechanical fooling of self-ridicule.

In his penetrating study, *Mark Twain a Century Hence*, published at the time of Mr. Clemens' death, Professor H. T. Peck makes this observation: "We must judge Mark Twain as a humorist by the very best of all he wrote rather than by the more dubious productions, in which we fail to see at every moment the winning qualities and the characteristic form of this very interesting American. As one would not judge of Tennyson by his dramas, nor Thackeray by his journalistic chit-chat, nor Sir Walter Scott by those romances which he wrote after his fecundity had been exhausted, so we must not judge Mark Twain by the dozen or more specimens which belong to the later period, when he was ill at ease and growing old. Let us rather go back with a sort of joy to what he wrote when he did so with spontaneity, when his fun was as natural to him as breathing, and when his humour was all American humour—

not like that of Juvenal or Hierocles—acrid, or devoid of anything individual—but brimming over with exactly the same rich irresponsibility which belonged to Steele and Lamb and Irving. It may seem odd to group a son of the New World and of the great West with those earlier classic figures who have been mentioned here; yet upon analysis it will be discovered that the humour of Mark Twain is at least first cousin to that which produced Sir Roger de Coverley and Rip Van Winkle and The Stout Gentleman."

The details of the Gambetta-Fourtou duel, in which Mark played a somewhat frightened second, have furnished untold amusement to thousands. And his description of the inadvertent *faux pas* he committed at his first public lecture is humorous for any age and society. The sign announcing the lecture read—"Doors open at 7½. The Trouble will begin at 8." For three days, Mark had been in a state of frightful suspense. Once his lecture had seemed humorous; but as the day approached, it seemed to him to be but the dreariest of fooling, without a vestige of real fun. He was so panic-stricken that he persuaded three of his friends, who were giants in stature, genial and stormy voiced, to act as *claquers* and pound loudly at the faintest suspicion of a joke. He bribed Sawyer, a half-drunk man, who had a laugh hung on a hair-trigger, to get off, naturally and easily during the course of the evening, as many laughs as he could. He begged a popular citizen and his wife to take a conspicuous seat in a box, so that everybody could see them. He explained that when he needed help, he would turn toward her and smile, as a signal, that he had given birth to an obscure joke. Then, if ever, was *her* time—not to investigate, but to *respond*!

The fateful night found him in the depths of dejection. But heartened up by a crowded house, full even to the aisles, he bravely set in and proceeded to capture the house. His *claquers* hammered madly whenever the very feeblest joke showed its head. Sawyer supported their herculean efforts with bursts of stentorian laughter. As Mark explained, not without a touch of pride, inferior jokes never fared so royally before. But his hour of humiliation was at hand. On delivering a bit of serious matter with impressive unction, to which the audience listened with rapt interest, he glanced involuntarily, as if for her approval, at his friend in the box. He remembered the compact, but it was too late—he smiled in spite of himself. Forth came her ringing laugh, peal after peal, which touched off the whole audience: the explosion was immense! Sawyer choked with laughter, and the bludgeons performed like pile-drivers. The little morsel of pathos was ruined; but what matter, so long as the audience took it as an intentional joke, and applauded it with unparalleled enthusiasm. Mark wisely let it go at that!

Reading through *The Innocents Abroad* after many years, I find that it has not lost its power to provoke the most side-splitting laughter; and the same may be said of *A Tramp Abroad* and *Following the Equator*, which, whilst not so boisterously comical, exhibit greater mastery and restraint. His own luck, as Mark Twain observed on one occasion, had been curious all his literary life. He never could tell a lie that anybody would doubt, nor a truth that anybody would believe. Could there be a more accurate or more concise definition of the effect of his writings, in especial of his travel notes? Like his mother, he too never used large words, but he had a natural gift for making small ones do effective work. How delightfully human is his comment on the vagaries of woman's shopping! Human nature he found very much the same all over the world; and he felt that it was so much like his dear native home to see a Venetian lady go into a store, buy ten cents' worth of blue ribbon, and then have it sent home in a scow. It was such little touches of nature as this which, as he said, moved him to tears in those far-off lands. In speaking of Palestine, he says that its holy places are not as deliriously beautiful as the books paint them. Indeed, he asserts that if one be calm and resolute, he can look on their beauty and live! He bequeathed his rheumatism to Baden-Baden. It was little, but it was all he had to give. His only regret was that he could not leave something more catching.

There is nothing better in all of *The Innocents Abroad* than his analysis of the theological hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. Disclaiming all intention to be frivolous, irreverent or blasphemous, he solemnly declared that his observations had taught him the real way the Holy Personages were ranked in Rome. "The Mother of God," otherwise the Virgin Mary, comes first, followed in order by the Deity, Peter, and some twelve or fifteen canonized Popes and Martyrs. Last of all came Jesus Christ the Saviour—but even then, always as an infant in arms!

Who can ever forget the Mark Twain who kissed the Hawaiian stranger for his mother's sake, the while robbing him of his small change; who was so struck by the fine points of his Honolulan horse that he hung his hat on one of them; who rode glaciers as gaily as he rode Mexican plugs, and found diverting programmes of the Roman Coliseum, in the dust and rubbish of two thousand years ago!

Samuel L. Clemens achieved instantaneous and world-wide popularity at a single bound by the creation of a fantastic and delightfully naïve character known as "Mark Twain." At a somewhat later day, Bernard Shaw achieved world-wide fame by the creation of a legendary and fantastic wit known as "G. B. S." To the composition of "Mark Twain" went all the wild humour of ignorance—the boisterously comic admixture of the sanguinary and the stoical. The humour of *The Jumping Frog* and *The Innocents Abroad* is the savage and naïve humour of the mining camp, not the sophisticated humour of civilization. It is significant that Mme. Blanc, a polished and refined intelligence, found the *nil admirari* attitude of "Mark Twain" no more enlightening nor suggestive than the stoicism of the North American Indian. This mirthful and mock-innocent naïveté, so alien to the delicate and subtle spirit of the French, found instant response in the heart of the Anglo-Saxon and Germanic peoples. The English and the Germans, no less than the Americans, rejoiced in this gay fellow with his combination of appealing ignorance and but half-concealed shrewdness. They laughed at this unsophisticated *naïf*, gazing in wide-eyed wonderment at all he saw; and they delighted in the consciousness that, behind this thin mask, lay an acute and searching intelligence revelling in the humorous havoc wrought by his keen perception of the contrasts and incongruities of life. The note of this early humour is perfectly caught in the incident of the Eygptian mummy. Deliberately assumed ignorance of the grossest sort, by Mark Twain and his companions, had the most devastating effect upon the foreign guide—one of that countless tribe to all of whom Mark applied the generic name of Ferguson. After driving Ferguson nearly mad with pretended ignorance, they finally asked him if the mummy was dead. When Ferguson glibly replied that he had been dead three thousand years, he was dumbfounded at the fury of the " doctor " for being imposed upon with vile second-hand carcases. The poor Frenchman was warned that if he didn't bring out a nice, *fresh* corpse at once, they would brain him! No wonder that, later, when he was asked for a description of the party, Ferguson laconically remarked that they were lunatics!

In speaking of contemporary society, Ibsen once remarked: "We have made a fiasco both in the heroic and the lover rôles. The only parts in which we have shown a little talent, are the naïvely comic; but with our more highly developed self-consciousness we shall no longer be fitted even for that." With time and "our more highly developed self-consciousness" have largely passed the novelty and the charm of this early naïvely comic humour of Mark Twain. But it is as valid still, as it was in 1867, to record honestly the impressions directly communicated to one by the novelties, peculiarities, individual standards and ideals of other peoples and races. Mark Twain spoke his mind with utter disregard for other people's opinions, the *dicta* of criticism or the authoritative judgment of the schools. *The Innocents Abroad* is eminently readable, not alone for its humour, its clever journalism, its remarkably accurate and detailed information, and its fine descriptions. The rare quality, which made it "sell right along—like the Bible," is that it is the vital record of a keen and searching intelligence. Mark Twain found so many of the "masterpieces of the world" utterly unimpressive and meaningless to him, that he actually began to distrust the validity of his own impressions. Every time he gloried to think that for once he had discovered an ancient painting that was beautiful and worthy of all praise, the pleasure it gave him was an infallible proof that it was not a beautiful picture, nor in any sense worthy of commendation! He pours out the torrents of his ridicule, not indiscriminately upon the works of the old masters themselves—though he regarded Nature as the grandest of all the old masters—but upon those half-baked sycophants who bend the knee to an art they do not understand, an art of which they feign comprehension by mouthings full of cheap and meaningless tags. As potent and effective as ever, in its fine comic irony, is that passage in which he expresses his "envy" of those people who pay lavish lip-service to scenes and works of art which their expressionless language shows they neither realize nor understand. He reserves his most biting condemnation for those second-hand critics who accept other people's opinions for their criteria, and rave over "beauty," "soul," "character," "expression" and "tone" in wretched, dingy, moth-eaten pictures. He hated with the heartiest detestation such people—whose sole ambition seemed to be to make a fine show of knowledge of art by means of an easily acquired vocabulary of inexpressive technical terms of art criticism.

There is much, I fear, of misguided honesty in Mark Twain's records of foreign travel. To the things which he personally reverenced, he was always reverential; and his expression of likes and dislikes, of prejudices and predilections, was honest and fearless. Grant as we may the humorist's right to exaggerate and even to distort, for the purposes of his fun-making, it does not therefore follow that his judgments, however forthright or sincere, are valid, reputable criticisms. One's enjoyment of his fresh and hilarious humour, his persistent fun-making is no whit impaired by the recognition that he was lacking in the faculty of historic imagination and in the finer artistic sense. It is, in a measure, because of his lack of culture and, more broadly, lack of real knowledge, that he was enabled to evoke the laughter of the multitude. "The Mississippi pilot, homely, naïve, arrogantly candid," says Mr. S. P. Sherman, "refuses to sink his identity in the object contemplated—that, as Corporal Nym would have said, is the humour of it. He is the kind of travelling companion that makes you wonder why you went abroad. He turns the Old World into a laughing-stock by shearing it of its storied humanity—simply because there is nothing in him to respond to the glory that was Greece, to the grandeur that was Rome—simpler because nothing is holier to him than a joke. He does not throw the comic light upon counterfeit enthusiasm ; he laughs at art, history, and antiquity from the point of view of one who is ignorant of them and mightily well satisfied with his ignorance." This picture reminds us of the foreign critics of *The Innocents Abroad* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*: it is too partial and restricted. The whole point of Mark Twain's humour, as exhibited in these travel notes, is missed in the statement that "he does not throw the comic light upon counterfeit enthusiasm"—for this might almost be taken as the "philosophy" of his books of foreign travel. And yet Mr. Sherman's dictum, in its entirety, quite clearly provokes the question whether, as he intimates, the "overwhelming majority" of his fellow-citizens also were not mightily pleased with Mark Twain's point of view, and whether they did not enjoy themselves hugely in laughing, not at him, but with him.

In commenting on the reasons for the broadening and deepening of his humour with the passage of time, Mr. Clemens once remarked to me: "I succeeded in the long run, where Shillaber, Doesticks, and Billings failed, because they never had an ideal higher than that of merely being funny. The first great lesson of my life was the discovery that I had to live down my past. When I first began to lecture, and in my earlier writings, my sole idea was to make comic capital out of everything I saw and heard. My object was not to tell the truth, but to make people laugh. I treated my readers as unfairly as I treated everybody else—eager to betray them at the end with some monstrous absurdity or some extravagant anti-climax. One night, after a lecture in the early days, Tom Fitch, the 'silver-tongued orator of Nevada,' said to me: 'Clemens, your lecture was magnificent. It was eloquent, moving, sincere. Never in my entire life have I listened to such a magnificent piece of descriptive narration. But you committed one unpardonable sin—*the* unpardonable sin. It is a sin you must never commit again. You closed a most eloquent description, by which you had keyed your audience up to a pitch of the intensest interest, with a piece of atrocious anti-climax which nullified all the really fine effect you had produced. My dear Clemens, whatever you do, never *sell* your audience.' And that," continued Mr. Clemens, "was my first really profitable lesson."

It was the toning down of his youthful extravagance—Fitch's precept not to "sell" his audience, Mrs. Fairbanks' warning not to try their endurance of the irreverent too far—that had a markedly salutary effect upon Mark Twain's humorous writings. There can be no doubt that the deep and lifelong friendship of Mr. Howells, expressing itself as occasion demanded in the friendliest criticism, had a subduing influence upon Mark Twain's tendency, as a humorist, to extravagance and headlong exaggeration. In time he left the field of carpet-bag observation—the humorous depicting of things seen from the rear of an observation car, so to speak—and turned to fiction. Now at last the long pent-up flood of observation upon human character and human characteristics found full vent. *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* are the romances of eternal youth, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. They are freighted, however, with a wealth of pungent and humorous characterization that have made of them contemporary classics. From ethical sophistication and moral truantry Mark Twain evolves an inexhaustible supply of humour. The revolt of mischievous and Bohemian boyhood against the stern limitations of formal Puritanism is, in a sense, a principle that he carried with him to the grave. "There are no more vital passages in his fiction," says Mr. Howells, "than those which embody character as it is affected for good as well as for evil by the severity of the local Sunday-schooling and church-going." Out of the pangs of conscience, the ingenious sedatives of sophistry, the numerous variations of the lie, he won a wholesome humour that left you thinking, by inversion, upon the moral involved. Knowledge of human nature finds expression in forms made permanently effective through the arresting permeation of humour. The incident of Tom Sawyer and the whitewashing of the fence is the sort of thing over which boy and man alike can chuckle with satisfaction—for Tom Sawyer had discovered a great law of human action without knowing it, namely, that in order to make a man or boy covet a thing, it is only necessary to make the thing difficult to attain. Huck's reasoning about chicken stealing—the exquisitely comic shifting of ground from morality to expediency—is a striking example of the best type of Mark Twain's humour. Following his father's example, Huck would occasionally "lift" a chicken that wasn't roosting comfortable; for had his father not told him that even if he didn't want the chicken himself, he could always find somebody that did want it, and a good deed ain't never forgot? Huck confesses that he had never seen his Pap when he didn't want the chicken himself!

The germ of Mark Twain's humour, wherever it is found, from *The Innocents Abroad* to *The Connecticut Yankee* and *Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven*, is found in the mental reactions resulting from stupendous and glaring contrasts. First it is the Wild Western humorist, primitive and untamed, running amuck through the petrified formulas and encrusted traditions of Europe. Then comes the fantastic juxtaposition of the shrewd Connecticut Yankee, with his comic irreverence and raucous sense of humour, his bourgeois limitations and provincial prejudices, to the Court of King Arthur, with its mediævalism, its primitive rudeness and social narrowness. How many have delighted in the Yankee's inimitable description of his feelings toward that classic damsel of the sixth century? At first he got along easily with the girl; but after a while he began to feel for her a sort of mysterious and shuddery reverence. Whenever she began to unwind one of those long sentences of hers, and got it well under way, he could never suppress the feeling that he was standing in the awful presence of the Mother of the German Language!

Mark Twain ransacked the whole world of his own day, all countries, savage and civilized, for the display of effective and ludicrous contrast; and he opened up an illimitable field for humanizing satire, as Mr. Howells has said, in his juxtaposition of sociologic types thirteen centuries apart. Not even heaven was safe from the comprehensive survey of his satire; and *Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven* is a remarkable document,—a forthright lay sermon,—the conventional idea of heaven, the theologic conception of eternity, as heedlessly taught from the pulpit, thrown into comic, yet profoundly significant, relief against the background of the common-sense of a deeply human, thoroughly modern intelligence.

Humour, as Thackeray has defined it, is a combination of wit and love. Certain it is that, in the case of Mark Twain, wit was a later development of his humour; the love was there all the time. Mark Twain has not been recognized as a wit; for he was primarily a humorist, and only secondarily a wit. But the passion for brief and pungent formulation of an idea grew upon him; and *Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar* is a mine of homely and memorable aphorism, epigram, injunction.

According to Mark Twain's classification, the comic story is English, the witty story French, the humorous story American. While the other two depend upon matter, the humorous story depends for its effect upon the manner of telling. The witty story and the comic story must be concise and end with a "point"; but the humorous story may be as leisurely as you please and have no particular destination. Mark Twain always maintained that, while anyone could tell effectively a comic or a witty story, it required a person skilled in an art of a rare and distinctive character to tell a humorous story successfully. Mark Twain was himself the supreme exemplar of the art of telling a humorous story. Take this little passage, for example, which convulsed one of his London audiences. He was speaking of a high mountain that he had come across in his travels. "It is so cold that people who have been there find it impossible to speak the truth; I know that's a fact (here a pause, a blank stare, a shake of the head, a little stroll across the platform, a sigh, a puff, a smothered groan), because—I've—(another pause)—been—(a longer pause)—there myself." Who could equal Mark Twain as a humorous narrator,

in his recital of the alarums and excursions, criminations and recriminations, over the story of somebody else's dog he sold to General Miles for three dollars? He delighted numerous audiences with his story of inveighing Mrs. Grover Cleveland at a White House reception into writing blindly on the back of a card: "He didn't." When she turned it over she discovered that it bore on the other side, in Mrs. Clemens' handwriting, the startling words: "Don't wear your arctics in the White House." I shall never forget his recital of the story of how his enthusiasm oozed away at a meeting in behalf of foreign missions. So moving was the fervid eloquence of the exhorter that, after fifteen minutes, if Mark Twain had had a blank cheque with him, he would gladly have turned it over, signed, to the minister, to fill out for any amount. But it was a very warm evening, the eloquence of the minister was inexhaustible—and Mark Twain's enthusiasm for foreign missions slowly oozed away—one hundred dollars, fifty dollars, and even lower still—so that when the plate was actually passed around, Mark put in ten cents and took out a quarter!

I was a witness in London, and at Oxford, in 1907, of the vast, spontaneous, national reception which Mark Twain received from the English people. One incident of that memorable visit is a perfect example of that masterly power over an audience, that deep humanity, with which Mark Twain was endowed. At the banquet presided over by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, which was the signal of Mark Twain's farewell to the English people, his peroration was as follows :

" Many and many a year ago I read an anecdote in Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast.* A frivolous little self-important captain of a coasting-sloop in the dried-apple and kitchen-furniture trade was always hailing every vessel that came in sight, just to hear himself talk and air his small grandeurs. One day a majestic Indiaman came ploughing by, with course on course of canvas towering into the sky, her decks and yards swarming with sailors, with macaws and monkeys and all manner of strange and romantic creatures populating her rigging, and thereto her freightage of precious spices lading the breeze with gracious and mysterious odours of the Orient. Of course, the little coaster-captain hopped into the shrouds and squeaked a hail : ' Ship ahoy ! What ship is that, and whence and whither ? ' In a deep and thunderous bass came the answer back, through a speaking trumpet : ' The Begum of Bengal, a hundred and twenty-three days out from Canton—

homeward bound! What ship is that?' The little captain's vanity was all crushed out of him, and most humbly he squeaked back: 'Only the Mary Ann—fourteen hours from Boston, bound for Kittery Point with—with nothing to speak of!' That eloquent word 'only' expressed the deeps of his stricken humbleness.

"And what is my case? During perhaps one hour in the twenty-four—not more than that—I stop and reflect. Then I am humble, then I am properly meek, and for that little time I am 'only the Mary Ann'—fourteen hours out, and cargoed with vegetables and tin-wear; but all the other twenty-three my self-satisfaction rides high, and I am the stately Indiaman, ploughing the great seas under a cloud of sail, and laden with a rich freightage of the kindest words that were ever spoken to a wandering alien, I think; my twenty-six crowded and fortunate days multiplied by five; and I am the Begum of Bengal, a hundred and twenty-three days out from Canton—homeward bound!"

Says "Charles Vale," in describing the scene: "The audience sat spellbound in almost painful silence, till it could restrain itself no longer; and when in rich, resonant, uplifted voice Mark Twain sang out the words: 'I am the Begum of Bengal, a hundred and twenty-three days out from Canton,' there burst forth a great cheer from one end of the room to the other. It seemed an inopportune cheer, and for a moment it upset the orator: yet it was felicitous in opportuneness. Slowly, after a long pause, came the last two words—like that curious, detached and high note in which a great piece of music suddenly ends—'Homeward bound.' Again there was a cheer: but this time it was lower; it was subdued; it was the fitting echo to the beautiful words—with their double significance—the parting from a hospitable land, the return to the native land. . . . Only a great littérateur could have conceived such a passage: only a great orator could have so delivered it."

Mark Twain was the greatest master of the anecdote this generation has known. He claimed the humorous story as an American invention, and one that has remained at home. His public speeches were little mosaics in the finesse of their art; and the intricacies of inflection, insinuation, jovial innuendo which Mark Twain threw into his gestures, his implicative pauses, his suggestive shrugs and deprecative nods—all these are hopelessly volatilized and disappear entirely from the printed copy of his speeches. He gave the most minute and elaborate study to the preparation of his speeches — polishing them dexterously and rehearsing every word, every gesture, with infinite care. Yet his readiness and fertility of resource in taking advantage, and making telling use, of things in the speeches of those immediately preceding him, were striking evidences of the rapidity of his thought-processes. In Boston, when asked what he thought about the existence of a heaven or a hell, he looked grave for a moment, and then replied: "I don't want to express an opinion. It's policy for me to keep silent. You see, I have friends in both places." His speech introducing General Hawley of Connecticut to a Republican meeting at Elmira, New York, is an admirable example of his laconic art: "General Hawley is a member of my church at Hartford, and the author of 'Beautiful Snow.' Maybe he will deny that. But I am only here to give him a character from his last place. As a pure citizen, I respect him; as a personal friend of years, I have the warmest regard for him; as a neighbour, whose vegetable garden adjoins mine, why—why, I watch him. As the author of 'Beautiful Snow,' he has added a new pang to winter. He is a square, true man in honest politics, and I must say he occupies a mighty lonesome position. So broad, so bountiful is his character that he never turned a tramp empty-handed from his door, but always gave him a letter of introduction to me. Pure, honest, incorruptible, that is Joe Hawley. Such a man in politics is like a bottle of perfumery in a glue factory—it may modify the stench, but it doesn't destroy it. I haven't said any more of him than I would say of myself. Ladies and gentlemen, this is General Hawley."

Mr. Chesterton maintains that Mark Twain was a wit rather than a humorist—perhaps something more than a humorist. "Wit," he explains, "requires an intellectual athleticism, because it is akin to logic. A wit must have something of the same running, working, and staying power as a mathematician or a metaphysician. Moreover, wit is a fighting thing and a working thing. A man may enjoy humour all by himself; he may see a joke when no one else sees it; he may see the point and avoid it. But wit is a sword; it is meant to make people feel the point as well as see it. All honest people saw the point of Mark Twain's wit. Not a few dishonest people felt it." The epigram, "Be virtuous, and you will be eccentric," has become a catchword; and everyone has heard Mark Twain's reply to the reporter asking for advice as to what to cable his paper, which had printed the statement that Mark Twain was dead: "Say that the statement is greatly exaggerated." He has admirably taken off humanity's enduring self-conceit in the statement that there isn't a Parallel of Latitude but thinks it would have been the Equator if it had had its rights. There is something peculiarly American in his warning to young girls not to marry—that is, not to excess! His remarks on compliments have a delightful and naïve freshness. He points out how embarrassing compliments always are. It is so difficult to take them naturally. You never know what to say. He had received many compliments in his lifetime, and they had always embarrassed him—he always felt that they hadn't said enough!

The incident of Mark Twain's first meeting with Whistler is quaintly illustrative of one phase of his broader humour. Mark Twain was taken by a friend to Whistler's studio, just as he was putting the finishing touches to one of his fantastic studies. Confident of the usual commendation, Whistler inquired his guest's opinion of the picture. Mark Twain assumed the air of a connoisseur, and approaching the picture remarked that it did very well, but—"he didn't care much for that cloud—"; and suiting the action to the word, appeared to be on the point of rubbing the cloud with his gloved finger. In genuine horror, Whistler exclaimed: "Don't touch it, the paint's wet!" "Oh, that's all right," replied Mark with his characteristic drawl: "these aren't my best gloves, anyhow!" Whereat Whistler recognized a congenial spirit, and their first hearty laugh together was the beginning of a friendly and congenial relationship.

I recall an incident in connection with the writing of his *Autobiography.* On more than one occasion, he declared that the *Autobiography* was going to be something awful—as caustic, fiendish, and devilish as he could make it. Actually, he was in the habit of jotting on the margin of the page, opposite to some startling characterization or diabolic joke: "Not to be published until ten (or twenty, or thirty) years after my death." One day I heard him vent his pent-up rage, in bitter and caustic words, upon a certain strenuous, limelight American politician. I could not resist the temptation to ask him if this, too, were going into the *Autobiography.* "Oh yes," he replied, decisively. "Everything goes in. I make no exceptions. But," he added reflectively, with the suspicion of a twinkle in his eye, "I shall make a note beside this passage: 'Not to be published until *one hundred and fifty years after my death*'!"

Mark Twain had numerous " doubles " scattered about the world. The number continually increased; once a month on an average, he would receive a letter from a new " double," enclosing a photograph in proof of the resemblance. Mark once wrote to one of these doubles as follows :

My dear Sir—

Many thanks for your letter, with enclosed photograph. Your resemblance to me is remarkable. In fact, to be perfectly honest, you look more like me than I look like myself. I was so much impressed by the resemblance that I have had your picture framed, and am now using it regularly, in place of a mirror, to shave by.

Yours gratefully,

S. L. Clemens.

Although not generally recognized, it is undoubtedly true that Mark Twain was a wit as well as a humorist. He was the author of many epigrams and curt aphorisms which have become stock phrases in conversation, quoted in all classes of society wherever the English language is spoken. His phrasing is unpretentious, even homely, wearing none of the polished brilliancy of La Rochefoucauld or Bernard Shaw ; but Mark Twain's sayings " stick " because they are rooted in shrewdness and hard common-sense.

Mark Twain's warning to the two burglars who stole his silverware from "Stormfield" and were afterwards caught and sent to the penitentiary, is very amusing, though not highly complimentary to American political life :—

"Now you two young men have been up to my house, stealing my tinware, and got pulled in by these Yankees up here. You had much better have stayed in New York, where you have the pull. Don't you see where you're drifting. They'll send you from here down to Bridgeport jail, and the next thing you know you'll be in the United States Senate. There's no other future left open to you."

The sign he posted after the visitation of these same burglars was a prominent ornament of the billiard room at "Stormfield" :—

NOTICE

To the next Burglar

There is nothing but plated-ware in this house, now and henceforth. You will find it in that brass thing in the dining-room over in the corner by the basket of kittens. If you want the basket, put the kittens in the brass thing.

Do not make a noise, it disturbs the family.

You will find rubbers in the front hall, by that thing which has the umbrellas in it, chiffonnier, I think they call it, or pergola, or something like that.

Please close the door when you go away!

Very truly yours,

S. L. Clemens.

Now these are examples of Mark Twain's humour, American humour, such as we are accustomed to expect from Mark Twain—humour not unmixed with a strong spice of wit. But Mark Twain was capable of wit, pure and unadulterated, curt and concise. I once saw him write in a young girl's birthday book an aphorism which he said was one of his favourites: "Truth is our most valuable possession. Let us economize it." The advice he once gave me as to the proper frame of mind for undergoing a surgical operation has always remained in my memory: "Console yourself with the reflection that you are giving the doctor pleasure, and that he is getting paid for it." Peculiarly memorable is his forthright dictum that the statue which advertises its modesty with a fig-leaf brings its modesty under suspicion. His business motto—unfortunately, a motto that he never followed—has often been attributed, because of its canny shrewdness, to Mr. Andrew Carnegie. The idea was to put all your eggs in one basket—and then—*watch that basket*! His anti-Puritanical convictions find concrete expression in his assertion that few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example. Truly classic, in usage if not in form, is his happy saying that faith is believing what you know ain't so. His definition of a classic as a book which people praise but don't read, is as frequently heard as are Biblical and Shakespearian tags.

Mr. Clemens once told me that he had composed between two and three hundred maxims during his life. Many of them, especially those from the old and new calendars of Pudd'nhead Wilson, bear the individual and peculiar stamp of Mark Twain's phraseology and outlook upon life—quaint, genial, and shrewd. In pursuance of his deep-rooted belief in the omnipotent power of training, he remarked that the peach was once a bitter almond, the cauliflower nothing but cabbage with a college education. He himself was not guiltless of that irreverence which he defined as disrespect for another man's god. Women took an almost unholy delight in describing some of their undesirable acquaintances, in Mark

Twain's phrase, as neither quite refined, nor quite unrefined, but just the kind of person that keeps a parrot!

At times, Mark Twain realized the sanctifying power of illusions in a world of harsh realities; for he asserted that when illusions are gone you may still exist, but you have ceased to live. A depressing sense of world-weariness sometimes overbore the native joyousness of his temperament; and he expressed his sense of deep gratitude to Adam, the first great benefactor of the race—because he had brought death into the world. A funeral always gave Mark Twain a sense of spiritual uplift, a sense of thankfulness because the dead friend had been set free. He thought it was far harder to live than to die.

In one of his early sketches, there was admirable wit in the suggestion to the organist for a hymn appropriate to a sermon on the Prodigal Son:—

> "Oh! we'll all get blind drunk
> When Johnny comes marching home!"

And in *The Innocents Abroad* there is the same sort of brilliant wit in the mad logic of his innocent query, on learning that St. Philip Neri's heart was so inflamed with divine love that it burst his ribs:

"I was curious to know what Philip had for dinner." Mark Twain was capable of epigrams worthy, in their dark levity, of Swift himself. In speaking of *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Anna E. Keeling has said: "Humour there is in almost every scene and every page; but it is such humour as sheds a wild gleam on the greatest Shakespearian tragedies—on the deep melancholy of *Hamlet*, the heartbreak of *Lear*." The greatest ironic achievements of Mark Twain, in brief compass, are the two stories: *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg* and *Was it Heaven or Hell?* They reveal the power and subtlety of his art as an ironic humorist—or shall we rather say, ironic wit? For they range all the way from the most mordant to the most pathetic irony—from Mephistophelean laughter to warm, human tears

"Sunt lachrymæ rerum."

"Make a reputation first by your more solid achievements," counselled Oliver Wendell Holmes. "You can't expect to do anything great with Macbeth, if you first come on flourishing Paul Pry's umbrella." Mark Twain has had to pay in full the penalty of comic greatness. The world is loth to accept a popular character at any rating other than its own. Whosoever sets himself the task of amusing the world must realize the almost insuperable difficulty of inducing the world to regard him as a serious thinker. Says Molière—

> *"C'est une étrange entreprise que celle*
> *de faire rire les honnêtes gens."*

The strangeness of the undertaking is no less pronounced than the rigour of its obligations. Mark Twain began his career as a professional humorist and fun-maker; he frankly donned the motley, the cap and bells. The man-in-the-street is not easily persuaded that the basis of the comic is, not uncommon nonsense, but glorified common-sense. The French have a fine-flavoured distinction in *ce qui remue* from *ce qui émeut*; and if *remuage* is the defining characteristic of *A Tramp Abroad, Roughing It*, and *The Innocents Abroad*, there is much of deep seriousness and genuine emotion in *Life on the Mississippi, Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn*, and *Pudd'nhead Wilson.* In the course of his lifetime, Mark Twain evolved from a fun-maker into a masterly humorist, from a sensational journalist into a literary artist. In explanation of this, let us recall the steps in that evolution. In his youth, this boy had no schooling worth speaking of; he lived in an environment that promised only stagnation and decay. As the young boy, barefooted and dirty, watched the steamboats pass and repass upon the surface of that great inland deep, the Mississippi, he conceived the ambition and the ideal of learning to know and to master that mysterious water. His dream, in time, was realized ; he not only became a pilot, but—which is infinitely more significant—he changed from a callow, indolent, unobservant lad, with undeveloped faculties, to a man, a master of the river, with a knowledge which, in its accuracy and minuteness, was, for its purpose, all-sufficient and complete.

I have always felt that, had it not been for this training in the great university of the Mississippi, Mark Twain might never have acquired that trained faculty for minute detail and descriptive elaboration without which his works, full of flaws as they are, might never have revealed the very real art which they betray. For the art of Mark Twain is the art of taking infinite pains—the art of exactitude, precision and detail. Humour *per se* is as ephemeral as the laugh—dying in the very moment of its birth. Art alone can give it enduring vitality. Mark Twain's native temperament, rich with humour and racy of the soil, drank in the wonder of the river and unfolded through communication with all its rude human devotees ; the quick mind, the eager susceptibility, developed and matured through rigorous education in particularity and detail; and before his spirit the very beauties of Nature herself disappeared in face of a consuming sense of the work of the world that must be done.

Mark Twain never wholly escaped the penalty that his reputation as a humorist compelled him to pay. He became more than popular novelist, more than a jovial entertainer: he became a public institution, as unmistakable and as national as the Library of Congress or the Democratic Party. Even in the latest years of his life, though long since dissociated in fact from the category of Artemus Ward, John Phœnix, Josh Billings, and Petroleum V. Nasby, Mark Twain could never be sure that his most solemn utterance might not be drowned in roars of thoughtless laughter.

"It has been a very serious and a very difficult matter," Mr. Clemens once said to me, "to doff the mask of humour with which the public is accustomed, in thought, to see me adorned. It is the incorrigible practice of the public, in this or in any country, to see only humour in the humorist, however serious his vein. Not long ago I wrote a poem, which I never dreamed of giving to the public, on account of its seriousness; but on being invited to address the women students of a certain great university, I was persuaded by a near friend to read this poem. At the close of my lecture I said: 'Now, ladies, I am going to read you a poem of mine'—which was greeted with bursts of uproarious laughter. 'But this is a truly serious poem,' I asseverated—only to be greeted with renewed and, this time, more uproarious laughter. Nettled by this misunderstanding, I put the poem in my pocket, saying, 'Well, young ladies, since you do not believe me to be serious, I shall not read the poem'—at which the audience almost went into convulsions of laughter."

Humour is a function of nationality. The same joke, as related by an American, a Scotchman, an Irishman, a Frenchman, carries with it a distinctive racial flavour and individuality of approach. Indeed, it is open to question whether most humour is not essentially local in its nature, requiring some specialized knowledge of some particular locality. It would be quite impossible for an Italian on his native heath to understand that great political satirist, "Mr. Dooley," on the Negro Problem, for example. After reading George Ade's *Fables in Slang*, Mr. Andrew Lang was driven to the desperate conclusion that humour varies with the parallels of latitude, a joke in Chicago being a riddle in London!

If one would lay his finger upon the secret of Mark Twain's world-wide popularity as a humorist, he would find that secret, primarily, in the universality and humanity of his humour. Mark Twain is a master in the art of broad contrast; incongruity lurks on the surface of his humour; and there is about it a staggering and cyclopean surprise. But these are mere surface qualities, more or less common, though at lower power, to all forms of humour. Nor is his international vogue as a humorist to be attributed to any tricks of style, to any breadth of knowledge, or even to any depth of intellectuality. His hold upon the world is due to qualities, not of the head, but of the heart. I once heard Mr. Clemens say that humour is the key to the hearts of men, for it springs from the heart; and worthy of record is his dictum that there is far more of feeling than of thought in genuine humour.

Mark Twain succeeded in "tickling the midriff of the English-speaking races" with a single story; and in time he showed himself to be, not only a man of letters, but also a man of action. His humour has been defined as the sunny break of his serious purpose. Horace Walpole has said that the world is a comedy to the man of thought, a tragedy to the man of feeling. To the great humorist—to

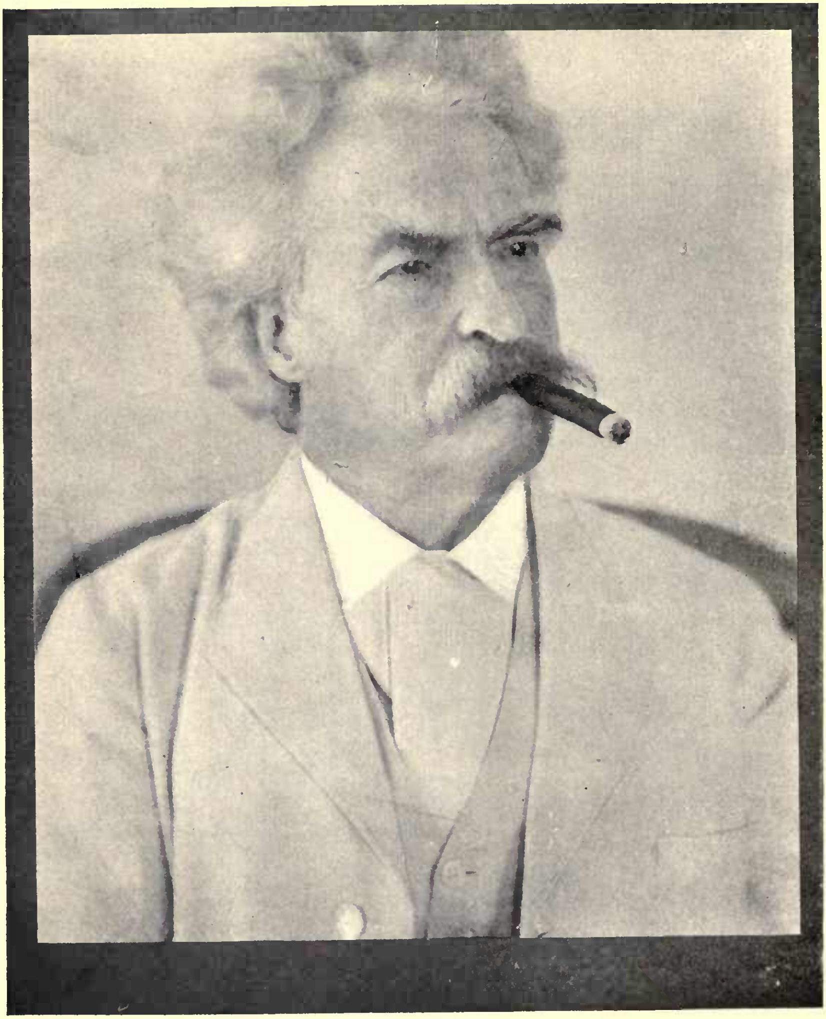
Mark Twain—the world was a tragi-comedy. Like Émile Faguet, he seemed at times to feel that grief is the most real and important thing in the world—because it separates us from happiness. He was an exemplar of the highest, truest, sincerest humour, perfectly fulfilling George Meredith's definition: "If you laugh all round him, tumble him, roll him about, deal him a smack, and drop a tear on him, own his likeness to you and yours to your neighbour, spare him as little as you shun, pity him as much as you expose, it is the spirit of Humour that is moving you." Mark Twain's fun was light-hearted and insouciant, his pathos genuine and profound. "He is, above all," said that oldest of English journals, *The Spectator*, "the fearless upholder of all that is clean, noble, straightforward, innocent, and manly. . . . If he is a jester, he jests with the mirth of the happiest of the Puritans; he has read much of English knighthood, and translated the best of it into his living pages; and he has assuredly already won a high degree in letters in having added more than any writer since Dickens to the gaiety of the Empire of the English language."

Mark Twain's humour flowed warm from the heart. He enjoyed to the utmost those two inalienable blessings: "laughter and the love of friends." He woke the laughter of an epoch and numbered a world for his friends. "He is the true consolidator of nations," said Mr. Augustine Birrell. "His delightful humour is of the kind which dissipates and destroys national prejudices. His truth and his honour, his love of truth and his love of honour, overflow all boundaries. He has made the world better by his presence."

IV. THE WORLD-FAMED GENIUS

"Art transmitting the simplest feelings of common life, but such, always, as are accessible to all men in the whole world—the art of common life—the art of a people—universal art."

Tolstoy: *What is Art?*



THE WORLD-FAMED GENIUS

SOME years ago a group of Mark Twain's friends, in a spirit of fun, addressed a letter to

MARK TWAIN
GOD KNOWS WHERE.

Though taking a somewhat circuitous route, the letter went unerringly to its goal; and it was not long before the senders of that letter received the laconic, but triumphant reply: "He did." They now turned the tables on the jubilant author, who equally as quickly received a letter addressed—

MARK TWAIN
THE DEVIL KNOWS WHERE.

It seemed that "*he*" did, too!

In his lifetime Mark Twain won a fame that was literally world-wide—a fame, indeed, which seemed to extend to realms peopled by noted theological characters. From very humble beginnings—he used facetiously to speak of coming up from the "very dregs of society"!—Mark Twain achieved international eminence and repute. This accomplishment was due to the power of brain and personality alone. In this sense, his career is unprecedented and unparalleled in the history of American literature.

It is a mark of the democratic independence of America that she has betrayed a singular indifference to the appraisal of her literature at the hands of foreign criticism. Upon her writers who have exhibited derivative genius — Irving, Hawthorne, Emerson, Longfellow — American criticism has lavished the most extravagant eulogiums. The three geniuses who have made permanent contributions to world-literature, who have either embodied in the completest degree the spirit of American democracy, or who have had the widest following of imitators and admirers in foreign countries, still await their final and just deserts at the hands of critical opinion in their own land. The genius of Edgar Allan Poe gave rise to schools of literature on the continent of Europe; yet in America his name must remain for years debarred from inclusion in a so-called Hall of Fame! Walt Whitman and Mark Twain, the two great interpreters and embodiments of America, represent the supreme contribution of democracy to universal literature. In so far as it is legitimate for anyone to be denominated a "self-made man" in literature, these men are justly entitled to such characterization. They owe nothing to European literature—their genius is supremely original, native, democratic. The case of Mark Twain, which is our present concern, is a literary phenomenon which imposes upon criticism, peculiarly upon American criticism, the distinct obligation of tracing the steps in his unhalting climb to an eminence that was international in its character, and of defining those signal qualities, traits, characteristics—individual, literary, social, racial, national—which compassed his world-wide fame. For if it be true that the judgment of foreign nations is virtually the judgment of posterity, then is Mark Twain already a classic.

Upon the continent of Europe, Mark Twain first received notable recognition in France at the hands of that brilliant woman, Mme. Blanc (Th. Bentzon), who devoted so much of her energies to the popularization of American literature in Europe. That one of her series of essays upon the American humorists which dealt with Mark Twain appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1872; in it appeared her admirable translation of *The Jumping Frog*. There is no cause for surprise that a scholarly Frenchwoman, reared on classic models and confined by rigid canons of art, should stand aghast at this boisterous, barbaric, irreverent jester from the wilds of America. When it is remembered that Mark Twain began his career as one of the sage-brush writers and gave free play to his passion for horse-play, his desire to "lay a mine" for the other fellow, and his defiance of the traditional and the classic, it is not to be wondered at that Mme. Blanc, while honouring him with recognition in the most authoritative literary journal in the world, could not conceal an expression of amazement over his enthusiastic acceptance in English-speaking countries.

"Mark Twain's *Jumping Frog* should be mentioned in the first place as one of his most popular little stories—almost a type of the rest. It is, nevertheless, rather difficult for us to understand, while reading this story, the 'roars of laughter' that it excited in Australia and in India, in New York and in London; the numerous editions of it which appeared; the epithet of 'inimitable' that the critics of the English press have unanimously awarded to it.

"We may remark that a Persian of Montesquieu, a Huron of Voltaire, even a simple Peruvian woman of Madame de Graffigny, reasons much more wisely about European civilization than an American of San Francisco. The fact is, that it is not sufficient to have wit, or even natural taste, in order to appreciate works of art.

"It is the right of humorists to be extravagant; but still common sense, although carefully hidden, ought *sometimes* to make itself apparent. . . . In Mark Twain the Protestant is enraged against the pagan worship of broken marble statues—

the democrat denies that there was any poetic feeling in the middle ages. The sublime ruins of the Coliseum only impressed him with the superiority of America, which punishes its criminals by forcing them to work for the benefit of the State, over ancient Rome, which could only draw from the punishments which it inflicted the passing pleasure of a spectacle.

"In the course of this voyage in company with Mark Twain, we at length discover, under his good-fellowship and apparent ingenuousness, faults which we should never have expected. He has in the highest degree that fault of appearing astonished at nothing—common, we may say, to all savages. He confesses himself that one of his great pleasures is to horrify the guides by his indifference and stupidity. He is, too, decidedly envious. . . . We could willingly pardon him his patriotic self-love, often wounded by the ignorance of Europeans, above all in what concerns the New World, if only that national pride were without mixture of personal vanity; but how comes it that Mark Twain, so severe upon those poor Turks, finds scarcely anything to criticize in Russia, where absolutism has nevertheless not ceased to flourish? We need not seek far for the cause of this indulgence: the Czar received our ferocious republicans; the Empress, and the Grand Duchess Mary, spoke to them in English.

"Taking the *Pleasure Trip on the Continent* altogether, does it merit the success it enjoys? In spite of the indulgence that we cannot but show to the judgments of a foreigner; while recollecting that those amongst us who have visited America have fallen, doubtless, under the influence of prejudices almost as dangerous as ignorance, into errors quite as bad—in spite of the wit with which certain pages sparkle—we must say that this voyage is very far below the less celebrated excursions of the same author in his own country."

Three years later, Mme. Blanc returns to the discussion of Mark Twain, in an essay in the *Revue des Deux Mondes,* entitled *L'Age Doré en Amérique* —an elaborate review and analysis of *The Gilded Age.* The savage charm and real simplicity of Mark Twain are not lacking in appeal, even to her sophisticated intelligence; and she is inclined to infer that jovial irony and animal spirits are qualities sufficient to amuse a young nation of people like the Americans who do not, like the French, pique themselves upon being *blasé.* According to her judgment, Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner are lacking in the requisite mental grasp for the "stupendous task of interpreting the great tableau of the American scene." Nor does she regard their effort at collaboration as a success from the standpoint of art. The charm of Colonel Sellers wholly escapes her; she cannot understand the almost loving appreciation with which this cheaply gross forerunner of the later American industrial brigand was greeted by the American public. The book repels her by "that mixture of good sense with mad folly—disorder"; but she praises Mark Twain's accuracy as a reporter. The things which offend her sensibilities are the wilful exaggeration of the characters, and the jests which are so elaborately constructed that "the very theme itself disappears under the mass of embroidery which overlays it." "The audacities of a Bret Harte, the grosser temerities of a Mark Twain, still astonish us," she concludes; "but soon we shall become accustomed to an American language whose savoury freshness is not to be disdained, awaiting still more delicate and refined qualities that time will doubtless bring."

In translating *The Jumping Frog* into faultless French (giving Mark Twain the opportunity for that delightful retranslation into English which furnished delight for thousands), in reviewing with elaboration and long citations *The Innocents Abroad* and *The Gilded Age*, Mme. Blanc introduced Mark Twain to the literary public of France; and Émile Blémont, in his *Esquisses Américaines de Mark Twain* (1881), still further enhanced the fame of Mark Twain in France by translating a number of his slighter sketches. In 1886, Eugène Forgues published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* an exhaustive review (with long citations) of *Life on the Mississippi*, under the title *Les Caravanes d'un humoriste*; and his prefatory remarks in regard to Mark Twain's fame in France at that time may be accepted as authoritative. He pointed out the praiseworthy efforts that had been made to popularize these "transatlantic gaieties," to import into France a new mode of comic entertainment. Yet he felt that the peculiar twist of national character, the type of wit peculiar to a people and a country, the specialized conception of the *vis comica* revealed in Mark Twain's works, confined them to a restricted milieu. The result of all the efforts to popularize Mark Twain in France, he makes plain, was an almost complete check; for to the French taste Mark Twain's pleasantry appeared *macabre,* his wit brutal, his temperament dry to excess. By some, indeed, his exaggerations were regarded as symptoms of mental alienation; and the originality of his verve did not succeed in giving a passport to the incoherence of his conceptions. "It has been said," remarked M. Forgues, with keen perception, "that an academician slumbers in the depths of every Frenchman; and it was this which prevented the success of Mark Twain in France. Humour, in France, has its laws and its restrictions. So the French public saw in Mark Twain a gross jester, incessantly beating upon a tom-tom to attract the attention of the crowd. They were tenacious in resisting all such blandishments. . . . As a humorist, Mark Twain was never appreciated in France. The appreciation he ultimately secured —an appreciation by no means inconsiderable, though in no sense comparable to that won in Anglo-Saxon and Germanic countries—was due to his sagacity and penetration as an observer, and to his marvellous faculty for calling up scenes and situations by the clever use of the novel and the *imprévu*. There was, even to the Frenchman, a certain lively appeal in an intelligence absolutely free of convention, sophistication, or reverence for traditionary views *qua* traditionary." Though at first the salt of Mark Twain's humour seemed to the French to be lacking in the Attic flavour, this new mode of comic entertainment, the leisurely exposition of the genially naïve American, in time won its way with the *blasé* Parisians. Travellers who could find no copy of the Bible in the street bookstalls of Paris, were confronted everywhere with copies of *Roughing It*. When the authoritative edition of Mark Twain's works appeared in English, that authoritative French journal, the *Mercure de France*, paid him this distinguished tribute: "His public is as varied as possible, because of the versatility and suppleness of his talent which addresses itself successively to all classes of readers. He has been called the greatest humorist in the world, and that is probably the truth; but he is also a charming and attractive story-teller, an alert romancer, a clever and penetrating observer, a philosopher without pretensions, and therefore all the more profound, and finally, a brilliant essayist."

Nevertheless, the observation of M. Forgues is just and authentic—the Attic flavour of *l'esprit Gaulois* is alien to the loosely articulated structure of American humour. The noteworthy criticism which Mark Twain directed at Paul Bourget's *Outre Mer*, and the subsequent controversy incident thereto, forced into light the racial and temperamental dissimilarities between the Gallic and the American *Ausschauung*. Mr. Clemens once remarked to me that, of all continental peoples, the French were most alien to the spirit of his humour. In *Le Figaro*, at the time of Mark Twain's death, this fundamental difference in taste once more comes to light: "It is as difficult for a Frenchman to understand Mark Twain as for a North American to admire La Fontaine. At first sight, there is nothing in common between that highly specialized faculty which the Anglo-Saxons of the old and the new world designate under the name of humour, and that quality with us which we call wit (*esprit*). And yet, at bottom, these two manifestations of the human genius, so different in appearance, have a common origin and reach the same result: they are, both of them, the glorification of good sense presented in pleasing and unexpected form. Only, this form must necessarily vary with peoples who do not speak the same language and whose skulls are not fashioned in the same way."

In Italy, as in France, the peculiar *timbre* of Mark Twain's humour found an audience not wholly sympathetic, not thoroughly *au courant* with his spirit. "Translation, however accurate and conscientious," as the Italian critic, Raffaele Simboli, has pointed out, "fails to render the special flavour of his work. And then in Italy, where humorous writing generally either rests on a political basis or depends on risky phrases, Mark Twain's sketches are not appreciated because the spirit which breathes in them is not always understood. The story of *The Jumping Frog*, for instance, famous as it is in America and England, has made little impression in France or Italy."

It was rather among the Germanic peoples and those most closely allied to them, the Scandinavians, that Mark Twain found most complete and ready response. At first blush, it seems almost incredible that the writings of Mark Twain, with their occasional slang, their colloquialisms and their local peculiarities of dialect, should have borne translation so well into other languages, especially into German. It must, however, be borne in mind that, despite these peculiar features of his writings, they are couched in a style of most marked directness, simplicity and native English purity. The ease with which his works were translated into foreign, especially the Germanic and allied tongues, and the eager delight with which they were read and comprehended by all classes, high and low, constitute perhaps the most signal conceivable tribute, not only to the humanity of his spirit, but to the genuine art of his marvellously forthright and natural style. It need be no cause for surprise that as early as 1872 he had secured Tauchnitz, of Leipzig, for his Continental agent. German translations soon appeared of *The Jumping Frog and Other Stories* (1874), *The Gilded Age* (1874), *The Innocents Abroad* and *The New Pilgrim's Progress* (1875), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). A few years later his sketches, many of them, were translated into virtually all printed languages, notably into Russian and modern Greek; and his more extended works gradually came to be translated into German, French, Italian, and the languages of Denmark and the Scandinavian peninsula.

The elements of the colossally grotesque, the wildly primitive, in Mark Twain's works, the underlying note of melancholy not less than the lawless Bohemianism, found sympathetic appreciation among the Germanic races. George Meredith has likened the functionings of Germanic humour to the heavy-footed antics of a dancing bear. Mark Twain's stories of the Argonauts, the miners and desperadoes, with their primitive, orgiastic existence; his narratives of the wild freedom of the life on the Mississippi, the lawless feuds and barbaric encounters —all appealed to the passion for the fantastic and the grotesque innate in the Germanic consciousness. To the Europeans, this wild genius of the Pacific Slope seemed to function in a sort of unexplored fourth dimension of humour—vast and novel—of which they had never dreamed. It is noteworthy that Schleich, in his *Psychopathik des Humors*, reserved for American humour, with Mark Twain as its leading exponent, a distinct and unique category which he denominated *phantastischen, grossdimensionalen.*

To the biographer belongs the task of describing, in detail, the lavish entertainment and open-hearted homage which were bestowed upon Mark Twain in German Europe. In writing of Mark Twain and his popularity in Germanic countries, Carl von Thaler unhesitatingly asserts that Mark Twain was fêted, wined and dined in Vienna, the Austrian metropolis, in an unprecedented manner, and awarded unique honours hitherto paid to no German writer. In Berlin, the young Kaiser bestowed upon him the most distinguished marks of his esteem; and praised his works, in especial *Life on the Mississippi*, with the intensest enthusiasm. When Mark Twain received a command from the Kaiser to dine with him, his young daughter exclaimed that if it kept on like this, there soon wouldn't be anybody left for him to become acquainted with but God! Mark said that it seemed uncomplimentary to regard him as unacquainted in that quarter; but of course his daughter was young, and the young always jump to conclusions without reflection. After hearing the Kaiser's eulogy on *Life on the Mississippi*, he was astounded and touched to receive a similar tribute, the same evening, from the *portier* of his lodging-house. He loved to dwell upon this, in later years—declaring it the most extraordinary coincidence of his life that a crowned head and a *portier*, the very top of an empire and the very bottom of it, should have expressed the very same criticism, and delivered the very same verdict, upon one of his books, almost in the same hour and the same breath.

The German edition of his works, in six volumes, published by Lutz of Stuttgart, in 1898, I believe, contained an introduction in which he was hailed as the greatest humorist in the world. Among German critics he was regarded as second only to Dickens in drastic comic situation and depth of feeling. *Robinson Crusoe* was held to exhibit a limited power of imagination in comparison with the ingenuity and inventiveness of *Tom Sawyer*. At times the German critics confessed their inability to discover the dividing line between astounding actuality and fantastic exaggeration. The descriptions of the barbaric state of Western America possessed an indescribable fascination for the sedate Europeans. At times Mark Twain's bloody jests froze the laughter on their lips ; and his " revolver-humour " made their hair stand on end. Though realizing that the scenes and events described in *Tom Sawyer*, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Roughing It*, and *Life on the Mississippi* could not have been duplicated in Europe, the German critics revelled in them none the less that " such adventures were possible only in America—perhaps only in the fancy of an American ! " " Mark Twain's greatest strength," says Von Thaler, " lies in the little sketches, the literary snap-shots. The shorter his work, the more striking it is. He draws directly from life. No other writer has learned to know so many different varieties of men and of circumstances, so many strange examples of the *Genus Homo,* as he; no other has taken so strange a course of development." The deeper elements of Mark Twain's humour did not escape the attention of the Germans, nor fail of appreciation at their hands. In his aphorisms, embodying at once genuine wit and experience of life, they discovered not merely the American author, but the universal human being; these aphorisms they found worthy of profound and lasting admiration. Sintenis found in Mark Twain a "living symptom of the youthful joy in existence" —a genius capable at will, despite his "boyish extravagance," of the virile formulation of fertile and suggestive ideas. His latest critic in Germany wrote at the time of his death, with a genuine insight into the significance of his work: "Although Mark Twain's humour moves us to irresistible laughter, this is not the main point in his books; like all true humorists, *ist der Witz mit dem Weltschmerz verbunden,* he is a witness to higher thoughts and higher emotions, and his purpose is to expose bad morals and evil circumstances, in order to improve and ennoble mankind." The critic of the *Berliner Zeitung* asserted that Mark Twain is loved in Germany more than all other humorists, English or French, because his humour " turns fundamentally upon serious and earnest conceptions of life." It is a tremendously significant fact that the works of American literature most widely read in Germany are the works of—striking conjunction!—Ralph Waldo Emerson and Mark Twain.

The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County fired the laugh heard round the world. Like Byron, Mark Twain woke one morning to find himself famous. A classic fable, which had once evoked inextinguishable laughter in Athens, was unconsciously re-told in the language of Angel's Camp, Calaveras County, where history repeated itself with a precision of detail startling in its miraculous coincidence. Despite the international fame thus suddenly won by this little fable, Mark Twain had yet to overcome the ingrained opposition of insular prejudice before his position in England and the colonies was established upon a sure and enduring footing. In a review of *The Innocents Abroad* in *The Saturday Review* (1870), the comparison is made between the Americans who " do Europe in six weeks " and the most nearly analogous class of British travellers, with the following interesting conclusions: " The American is generally the noisier and more actively disagreeable, but, on the other hand, he often partially redeems his absurdity by a certain naïveté and half-conscious humour. He is often laughing in his sleeve at his own preposterous brags, and does not take himself quite so seriously as his British rival. He is vulgar, and even ostentatiously and atrociously vulgar; but the vulgarity is mixed with a real shrewdness which rescues it from simple insipidity. We laugh at him, and we would rather not have too much of his company; but we do not feel altogether safe in despising him." The lordly condescension and gross self-satisfaction here betrayed are but preliminaries to the ludicrous density of the subsequent reflections upon Mark Twain himself: "He parades his utter ignorance of Continental languages and manners, and expresses his very original judgments on various wonders of art and nature with a praiseworthy frankness. We are sometimes left in doubt whether he is speaking in all sincerity or whether he is having a sly laugh at himself and his readers"! It is quite evident that the large mass of English readers, represented by *The Saturday Review*, had not caught Mark Twain's tone; but even the reviewer is more than half won over by the infectiousness of this new American humour. "Perhaps we have persuaded our readers by this time that Mr. Twain (*sic*) is a very offensive specimen of the vulgarest kind of Yankee. And yet, to say the truth, we have a kind of liking for him. There is a frankness and originality about his remarks which is (*sic*) pleasanter than the mere repetition of stale raptures; and his fun, if not very refined, is often tolerable in its way. In short, his pages may be turned over with amusement, as exhibiting more or less consciously a very lively portrait of the uncultivated American tourist, who may be more obtrusive and misjudging, but is not quite so stupidly unobservant as our native product. We should not choose either of them for our companions on a visit to a church or a picture-gallery, but we should expect most amusement from the Yankee as long as we could stand him." It was this review which gave Mark Twain the opening for his celebrated parody—a parody which, I have always thought, went far to opening the eyes of the British public to the true spirit of his humour. Such irresistible fun could not fail of appreciation at the hands of a nation which regarded Dickens as their representative national author.

Two years later, Mark Twain received in England an appreciative reception of wellnigh national character. Whilst the literary and academic circles of America withheld their unstinted recognition of an author so primitive and unlettered, Great Britain received him with open arms. He was a welcome guest at the houses of the exclusive; the highest dignitaries of public life, the authoritative journals, the leaders of fashion, of thought, and of opinion openly rejoiced in the breezy unconventionality, the fascinating daring, and the genial personality of this new variety of American genius. His English publisher, John Camden Hotten, wrote in 1873: "How he dined with the Sheriff of London and Middlesex; how he spent glorious evenings with the wits and literati who gather around the festive boards of the Whitefriars and the Savage Clubs; how he moved in the gay throng at the Guildhall conversazione; how he feasted with the Lord Mayor of London; and was the guest of that ancient and most honourable body—the City of London Artillery—all these matters we should like to dwell upon." His public lectures, though not so popular as those of Artemus Ward, won him recognition as a master in all the arts of the platform. Mr. H. R. Haweis, who heard him once at the old Hanover Square Rooms, thus describes the occasion: "The audience was not large nor very enthusiastic. I believe he would have been an increasing success had he stayed longer. We had not time to get accustomed to his peculiar way, and there was nothing to take us by storm, as in Artemus Ward. . . . . He came on and stood quite alone. A little table, with the traditional water-bottle and tumbler, was by his side. His appearance was not impressive, not very unlike the representation of him in the various pictures in his *Tramp Abroad.* He spoke more slowly than any other man I ever heard, and did not look at his audience quite enough. I do not think that he felt altogether at home with us, nor we with him. We never laughed loud or long; no one went into those irrepressible convulsions which used to make Artemus pause and look so hurt and surprised. We sat throughout expectant and on the *qui vive,* very well interested, and gently simmering with amusement. With the exception of one exquisite description of the old Magdalen ivy-covered collegiate buildings at Oxford University, I do not think there was one thing worth setting down in print. I got no information out of the lecture, and hardly a joke that would wear, or a story that would bear repeating. There was a deal about the dismal, lone silver-land, the story of the Mexican plug that bucked, and a duel which never came off, and another duel in which no one was injured; and we sat patiently enough through it, fancying that by and by the introduction would be over, and the lecture would begin, when Twain suddenly made his bow and went off! It was over. I looked at my watch; I was never more taken aback. I had been sitting there exactly an hour and twenty minutes. It seemed ten minutes at the outside. If you have ever tried to address a public meeting, you will know what this means. It means that Mark Twain is a consummate public speaker. If ever he chose to say anything, he would say it marvellously well; but in the art of saying nothing in an hour, he surpasses our most accomplished parliamentary speakers."

The nation which had been reared upon the wit of Sidney Smith, the irony of Swift, the *gros sel* of Fielding, the extravagance of Dickens, was ripe for the colossal incongruities and daring contrasts of Mark Twain. They recognized in him not only "the most successful and original wag of his day," but also a rare genius who shared with Walt Whitman "the honour of being the most strictly American writer of what is called American literature." We read in a review of *A Tramp Abroad*, published in *The Athenæum* in 1880: "Mark Twain is American pure and simple. To the eastern motherland he owes but the rudiments, the groundwork, already archaic and obsolete to him, of the speech he has to write; in his turn of art, his literary method and aims, his intellectual habit and temper, he is as distinctly national as the Fourth of July." Mark Twain was admired because he was "a literary artist of exceptional skill"; and it was ungrudgingly acknowledged that "he has a keen sense of character and uncommon skill in presenting it dramatically; and he is also an admirable story-teller, with the anecdotic instinct and habit in perfection, and with a power of episodic narrative that is scarcely equalled, if at all, by Mr. Charles Reade himself." Indeed, from the early days of *The Innocents Abroad*, the "first transatlantic democratic utterance which found its way into the hearing of the mass of English people"; during the period of Tom Sawyer, "the completest boy in fiction," the immortal *Huckleberry Finn*, "the standard picaresque novel of America—the least trammelled piece of literature in the language," and *Life on the Mississippi*, vastly appreciated in England as in Germany for its *cultur-historisch* value; down to the day when Oxford University bestowed the coveted honour of its degree upon Mark Twain, and all England took him to their hearts with fervour and abandon—during this long period of almost four decades, Mark Twain progressively strengthened his hold upon the imagination of the English people and, like Charles Dickens before him, may be said to have become the representative author of the Anglo-Saxon race. "The vast majority of readers here regard him," said Mr. Sydney Brooks in 1907, "to a degree in which they regard no other living writer, as their personal friend, and love him for his tenderness, his masculinity, his unfailing wholesomeness even more than for his humour." To all who love and admire Mark Twain, these words in which he was welcomed to England in 1907 should stand as a symbol of that racial bond, that *entente cordiale* of blood and heart, which he did so much to strengthen and secure. "A compliment paid to Mark Twain is something more than a compliment to a great man, a great writer, and a great citizen. It is a compliment to the American people, and one that will come home to them with peculiar gratification. . . . The feeling for Mark Twain among his own people is like that of the Scotch for Sir Walter eighty odd years ago, or like that of our fathers for Charles Dickens. There is admiration in it, gratitude, pride, and, above all, an immense and intimate tenderness of affection. To writers alone it is given to win a sentiment of this quality—to writers and occasionally, by the oddness of the human mind, to generals. Perhaps one would best take the measure of the American devotion to Mark Twain by describing it as a compound of what Dickens enjoyed in England forty years ago, and of what Lord Roberts enjoys to-day, and by adding something thereto for the intensity of all transatlantic emotions. The 'popularity' of statesmen, even of such a statesman as President Roosevelt, is a poor and flickering light by the side of this full flame of personal affection. It has gone out to Mark Twain not only for what he has written, for the clean, irresistible extravagance of his humour and his unfailing command of the primal feelings, for his tenderness, his jollity, and his power to read the heart of boy and man and woman; not only for the tragedies and afflictions of his life so unconquerably borne; not only for his brave and fiery dashes against tyranny, humbug, and corruption at home and abroad; but also because his countrymen feel him to be, beyond all other men, the incarnation of the American spirit."

Mark Twain achieved a position of supreme eminence as a representative national author which is without a parallel in the history of American literature. This position he achieved directly by his appeal to the great mass of the people, despite the *dicta* of the *literati*. At a time when England and Europe were throwing wide the doors to Mark Twain, the culture of his own land was regarding him with slighting condescension, or with mildly quizzical unconcern. Boston regarded him with fastidious and frigid disapproval, Longfellow and Lowell found little in him to admire or approve. There were notable exceptions, as Mr. Howells has recently pointed out—Charles Eliot Norton, Professor Francis J. Child, and most notable of all, Mr. Howells himself; but in general it is true that "in proportion as people thought themselves refined they questioned that quality which all recognize in him now, but which was then the inspired knowledge of the simple-hearted multitude." The professors of literature regarded Mark Twain as an author whose works were essentially ephemeral; and stood in the breach for Culture against the barbaric invasion of primitive Western Barbarism. Professor W. P. Trent was, I believe, the first to cite Professor Richardson's *American Literature* (published in 1886) as a typical instance of the position of literary culture in regard to Mark Twain. "But there is a class of writers," we read in that work, "authors ranking below Irving or Lowell, and lacking the higher artistic or moral purpose of the greater humorists, who amuse a generation and then pass from sight. Every period demands a new manner of jest, after the current fashion. . . . The reigning favourites of the day are Frank R. Stockton, Joel Chandler Harris, the various newspaper jokers, and 'Mark Twain.' [*Note the damning position!*] But the creators of 'Pomona' and 'Rudder Grange,' of 'Uncle Remus and his Folk-lore Stories,' and 'Innocents Abroad,' clever as they are, must make hay while the sun shines. Twenty years hence, unless they chance to enshrine their wit in some higher literary achievement, their unknown successors will be the privileged comedians of the republic. Humour alone never gives its masters a place in literature; it must coexist with literary qualities, and must usually be joined with such pathos as one finds in Lamb, Hood, Irving, or Holmes." This passage stands in the 1892 edition of that work, though *Tom Sawyer* had appeared in 1876, *The Prince and the Pauper* in 1882, *Life on the Mississippi* in 1883, *Huckleberry Finn* in 1884, and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* in 1889. Opinions analogous to those expressed in the passage just cited have found frequent expression among leaders of critical opinion in America;

and only yesterday *The Jumping Frog* and *The Innocents Abroad* were seriously put forward, by a clever and popular American critic, as Mark Twain's most enduring claims upon posterity! A bare half-dozen men in the ranks of American literary criticism have recognized and eloquently spoken forth in vindication of Mark Twain's title as a classic author, not simply of American literature, but of the literature of the world.

It is, even now, perhaps not too early to attempt some sort of inquiry into the causes contributory to Mark Twain's recognition as the prime representative of contemporary American literature. One of the cheap catchwords of Mark Twain criticism is the statement that he is "American to the core," and that his popular appreciation in his own country was due to the fact that he most completely embodied the national genius. How many of those who confidently advance this vastly significant statement, one curiously wonders, have seriously endeavoured to make plain to others—or even to themselves—the reasons therefor? Perhaps in seeking the causes for Mark Twain's renown in his own country one may discover the causes for his world-wide fame.

A map of the United States, upon which were

marked the localities and regions made famous by the writings of Mark Twain, would show that, geographically, he has known and studied this vast country in all the grand divisions of its composition. Bred from old Southern stock, born in the Southwest, he passed his youth upon the bosom of that great natural division between East and West, the Mississippi River, which cleaves in twain the very body of the nation. In the twenties he lost the feeling of local attachment in the vast democracy of the West, and looked life—a strangely barbaric and primitive life—straight in the face. This is the first great transformation in his life—behold the Westerner! After enriching his mind through contact with civilizations so diverse as Europe and the Sandwich Islands, he settled down in Connecticut, boldly foreswore the creeds and principles of his native section, and underwent a new transformation—behold the Yankee! Once again, travel in foreign lands, association with the most intellectual and cultured circles of the world, broadened his vision; yet this cosmopolitan experience, far from diminishing his racial consciousness, tended still further to accentuate the national characteristics. In this new transformation, we behold the typical American! The later years, of cosmopolitan renown, of world-wide fame, throw into high relief the last transformation—behold the universally human spirit! Under this crude catalogue, the main lines of Mark Twain's development stand out in sharp definition. The catalogue, however, is only too crude—it is impossible to say with precision just when such and such a transformation actually took place. It is only intended to be suggestive; for we must bear in mind that Mark Twain never changed character. His spirit underwent an evolutionary process—broadening, deepening, enlarging its vision with the passage of the years.

The part which the South played in the formation of the character and genius of Mark Twain has been little noted heretofore. It was in the South and Southwest that the creator of the humour of local eccentrics first appeared in full flower; and "Ned Brace," "Major Jones," and "Sut Lovengood" have in them the germs of that later Western humour that was to come to full fruition in the works of Bret Harte and Mark Twain. The stage coach and the river steamboat furnished the means for disseminating far and wide the gross, the ghastly, the extravagant stories, the oddities of speech, the fantastic jests which emerged from the clash of diverse and oddly-assorted types. The jarring contrasts, the incongruities and surprises daily furnished by the picturesque river life unquestionably stimulated and fertilized the latent germs of humour in the young cub-pilot, Sam Clemens. Through Mark Twain's greatest works flows the stately Mississippi, magically imparting to them some indefinable share of its beauty, its variety, its majesty, its immensity; and there is no exaggeration in the conclusion that it is the greatest natural influence which his works betray. Reared in a slave-holding community of narrow-visioned, arrogantly provincial people of the lower middle class; seeing his own father so degrade himself as to cuff his negro house-boy; consorting with ragamuffins, the rag-tag and bob-tail of the town, in his passion for bohemianism and truantry—young Clemens never learned to know the beauty and the dignity, the purity and the humanity, of that aristocratic patriarchal South which produced such beautiful figures as Lee and Lanier. Not even his most enthusiastic biographers have attempted to palliate, save with half-hearted facetiousness, his inglorious desertion of the cause which he had espoused. Mark Twain is the most speedily "reconstructed rebel" on record. Is it broad-minded—or even accurate!

—for Mr. Howells to say of Mark Twain: "No one has ever poured such scorn upon the second-hand, Walter-Scotticised, pseudo-chivalry of the Southern ideal?" Mark Twain never, I firmly believe, held up to ridicule the Southern "ideal." But in a well-known and excellent passage in *Life on the Mississippi*, he properly pokes fun at the "wordy, windy, flowery 'eloquence,' romanticism, sentimentality—all imitated from Sir Walter Scott," of the Southern literary journal of the thirties and forties. In later years Mark Twain, in his *Joan of Arc*, voiced a spirit of noble chivalry which bespoke the "Southern ideal" of his Virginia forbears; and that delicacy of instinct in matters of right and wrong which is so conspicuous a trait of Mark Twain's is a symptom of that "moral elegance" which Mr. Owen Wister has pronounced to be one of the defining characteristics of the Southern American. "No American of Northern birth or breeding," Mr. Howells pertinently observes, "could have imagined the spiritual struggle of Huck Finn in deciding to help the negro Jim to his freedom, even though he should be for ever despised as a negro thief in his native town, and perhaps eternally lost through the blackness of his sin. No Northerner could have come so close to the heart of a Kentucky feud, and revealed it so perfectly, with the whimsicality playing through its carnage, or could have so brought us into the presence of the sardonic comi-tragedy of the squalid little river town where the store-keeping magnate shoots down his drunken tormentor in the arms of the drunkard's daughter, and then cows with bitter mockery the mob that comes to lynch him."

The influence of the West upon the character and genius of Mark Twain is momentous and unmistakable. Mark Twain found room for development and expansion in the primitive freedom of the West. It was here, I think, that there were bred in him that breezy democracy of sentiment and that hatred of sham and pretence which fill his writings from beginning to end. In the West, virgin yet recalcitrant, every man stood—or fell—by force of his own exertions; every man, without fear or favour, struggled for fortune, for competence—or for existence. It was a case of the survival of the fittest. In face of bleak Nature—the burning alkali desert, the obdurate soil, the rock-ribbed mountains,—all men were free and equal, in a camaraderie of personal effort. In this primitive democracy, every man demanded for himself what he saw others getting. The pretender, the hypocrite, the sham, the humbug soon went to the wall, exposed in the nakedness of his own impotency. Humour is a salutary aid in the struggle of the individual with the contrasts of life; indeed it may be said to be born of the perception of those contrasts. In a degree no whit inferior to the variegated river life, the life of the West furnished contrasts and incongruities innumerable—vaster perhaps, and more significant. There was the incessant contrast of civilization with barbarism, of the East with the West; and there was infinite play for the comic *exposé* of the credulous "tenderfoot" at the hands of the pitiless cowboy. Roars of Gargantuan laughter shook the skies as each new initiate unwittingly succumbed to the demoniac wiles of his tormentors. The West was one vast theatre for the practice of the "practical joke." Behind everything, menacing, foreboding, tragic, lay the stupendous contrast between Man and Nature; and though the miner, the granger, the cowboy laughed defiantly at civilization and at Nature, there crept into the consciousness of each the conviction that, in the long run, civilization must triumph, and that, in order to win success, Nature must be conquered and subdued. In such an environment, with its spirit of primitive democracy, its atmosphere of wild and

ribald jest, its contempt for the impostor, its perpetually recurring incongruities, and behind all the solemn, perhaps tragic, presence of inexorable Nature—in such an environment were sharpened and whetted in Mark Twain the sense of humour, the spirit of real democracy bred of competitive effort, and the hatred for pretence, sham, and imposture.

It was not, I think, until Mark Twain went to live in Connecticut and, as he expressed it, became a scribbler of books, and an immovable fixture among the other rocks of New England, that he developed complete confidence in himself and his powers. That passion for successful self-expression, which Mr. Nicholas Murray Butler has defined as the main ambition of the American, became the dominant motive of Mark Twain's life. Of his experience as a steamboat pilot, Mark Twain has said that in that brief, sharp schooling he got personally and familiarly acquainted with about all the different types of human nature that are to be found in fiction, biography or history. In the West he had still further enriched his mind with an inexhaustible store of first-hand knowledge of human nature. In rotation he had been tramping jour printer, river pilot, private secretary, miner, reporter, lecturer. He now turns to literature in real earnest, and begins to display that vast store of knowledge derived from actual contact with the infinitely diversified realities of American life. Mark Twain takes on more and more of the characteristics of the Yankee—those characteristics which constitute the basis of his success: inventiveness and ingenuity, the practical efficiency, the shrewdness and the hard common-sense. It is the last phase in the formation of the national type.

It was, I venture to say, in some such way as this that Mark Twain came to assume in the eyes of his countrymen an embodiment of the national spirit. He was the self-made man in the self-made democracy. He was at once his own creation and the creation of a democracy. There were humorists in America before Mark Twain; there are humorists in America still. But Mark Twain succeeded not merely in captivating the great mass of the people; he achieved the far more difficult and unique distinction of convincing his countrymen of his essential fellowship, his temperamental affinity, with them. This miracle he wrought by the frankest and most straightforward revelation of the actual experiences in his own life and the lives of those he had known with perfect intimacy. It is true that he wrote a few books dealing with other times, other scenes, than our own in the present and in America. But I daresay that his popularity with the mass of his countrymen would not have been in any degree lessened had he never written these few books. Indeed, it is hardly to be doubted that his books were successful in the ratio of their autobiographic nature. For the character he revealed in those books of his which are essentially autobiographic, is the character dear to the American heart; and the experiences, vicissitudes, and hardships, shot through and irradiated with a high boisterousness of humour, found a joyous sympathy in the minds and hearts of men who had all "been there" themselves. In Mark Twain the American people recognized at last the sturdy democrat, independent of foreign criticism; confident in the validity and value of his own ideas and judgments; believing loyally in his country's institutions, and upholding them fearlessly before the world; fundamentally serious and self-reliant, yet with a practicality tempered by humane kindliness, warmth of heart, and a strain of persistent idealism; rude, boisterous, even uncouth, yet withal softened by sympathy for the under-dog, a boundless love for the weak, the friendless, the oppressed; lacking in profound intellectuality, yet supreme in the possession of the simple and homely virtues—an upright and honourable character, a good citizen, a man tenacious of the sanctity of the domestic virtues. America has produced finer and more exalted types—giants in intellectuality, princes in refinement and delicacy of spirit, savants in culture, classics in authorship. An American type combining culture with picturesqueness, refinement with patriotism, suavity with self-reliance, desire it as we may, still awaits the imprimatur of international recognition. America has sufficient cause for gratification in the memory of that quaint and sturdy figure so conspicuously bearing the national stamp and superscription. Perhaps no American has equalled Mark Twain in the quality of subsuming and embodying in his own character so many elements of the national spirit and genius. In letters, in life, Mark Twain is the American *par excellence.*

Underneath those qualities which combined to produce in Mark Twain a composite American type, lay something deeper still—that indefinable *je ne sais quoi* which procured him international fame. Humour alone is utterly inadequate for achieving so momentous a result—though humour ostensibly constituted the burden of the appeal. As a matter of fact, vehemently as the professors may deny it, Mark Twain was an artist of remarkable force and power. From the days when he came under the tutelage of Mr. Howells, and humbly learned to prune away his stylistic superfluities of the grosser sort, Mark Twain indubitably began to subject himself to the discipline of stern self-criticism. While it is true that he never learned to realize in full measure, to use Pater's phrase, "the responsibility of the artist to his materials," he assuredly disciplined himself to make the most, in his own way, of the rude and volcanic power which he possessed. It is fortunate that Mark Twain never subjected himself to the refinements of academic culture; a Harvard might well have spoiled a great author. For Mark Twain had a memorable tale to tell of rude, primitive men and barbaric, remote scenes and circumstances; of truant and resourceful boyhood exercising all its cunning in circumventing circumstance and mastering a calling. And he had that tale to tell in the unlettered, yet vastly expressive, phraseology of the actors in those wild events. The secret of his style is directness of thought, a sort of shattering clarity of utterance, and a mastery of vital, vigorous, audacious individual expression. He had a remarkable feeling for words and their uses; and his language is the unspoiled, expressive language of the people. At times he is primitive and coarse; but it is a Falstaffian note, the mark of universality rather than of limitation. His art was, in Tolstoy's phrase, "the art of a people—universal art"; and his style was rich in the locutions of the common people, rich and racy of the soil. A signal merit of his style is its admirable adaptation to the theme. The personages of his novels always speak "in character"—with perfect reproduction, not only of their natural speech, but also of their natural thoughts. Though Mr. Henry James may have said that one must be a very rudimentary person to enjoy Mark Twain, there is unimpeachable virtue in a rudimentary style in treatment of rudimentary or,—as I should prefer to phrase it,—fundamental things. Mr. James, I feel sure, could never have put into the mouth of a "rudimentary" person like Huck, so vivid and graphic a description of a storm with its perfect reproduction of the impression caught by the "rudimentary" mind. "Writers of fiction," says Sir Walter Besant in speaking of this book, "will understand the difficulty of getting inside the brain of that boy, seeing things as he saw them, writing as he would have written, and acting as he would have acted; and presenting to the world true, faithful, and living *effigies* of that boy. The feat has been accomplished; there is no character in fiction more fully, more faithfully, presented than the character of *Huckleberry Finn*. . . . It may be objected that the characters are extravagant. Not so. They are all exactly and literally true; they are quite possible in a country so remote and so primitive. Every figure in the book is a type; *Huckleberry Finn* has exaggerated none. We see the life—the dull and vacuous life—of a small township upon the Mississippi River forty years ago. So far as I know, it is the only place where we can find that phase of life portrayed."

Mark Twain impressed one always as writing with utter individuality — untrammelled by the limitations of any particular sect of art. In his books of travel, he reveals not only the instinct of the trained journalist for the novel and the effective, but also the feeling of the artist for the beautiful, the impressive, and the sublime. His descriptions, of striking natural objects, such as the volcano of Mount Kilauea in the Sandwich Islands, of memorable architecture, such as the cathedral at Milan, show that he possessed the "stereoscopic imagination" in rare degree. The picture he evokes of Athens by moonlight, in the language of simplicity and restraint, ineffaceably fixes itself in the fancy.

Mark Twain was regarded in France as a remarkable "impressionist" and praised by the critics for the realistic accuracy and minuteness of his delineation. Kipling frankly acknowledged the great debt that he owed him. Tennyson spoke in high praise of his *finesse* in the choice of words, his feeling for the just word to catch and, as it were, visualize the precise shade of meaning desired. In truth, Mark Twain was an impressionist, rather than an imaginative artist. That passage in *A Yankee in King Arthur's Court* in which he describes an early morning ride through the forest, pictorially evocative as it is, stands self-revealed—a confusedly imaginative effort to create an image he has never *experienced.*

If we set over beside this the remarkable descriptions of things seen, as minutely evocative as instantaneous photographs—such, for example, as the picture of a summer storm, or preferably, the picture of dawn on the Mississippi, both from *Huckleberry Finn*—pictures Mark Twain had seen and *lived* hundreds of times, we see at once the striking superiority of the realistic impressionist over the imaginative artist.

I have always felt that the most lasting influence of his life—the influence which has left the most pervasive impression upon his art and thought—is portrayed in that classic and memorable passage in which he portrays the marvellous spell laid upon him by that mistress of his youth, the great river.

To the young pilot, the face of the water in time became a wonderful book. For the uninitiated traveller it was a dead language, but to the young pilot it gave up its most cherished secrets. He came to feel that there had never been so wonderful a book written by man. To its haunting beauty, its enfolding mystery, he yielded himself unreservedly—drinking it in like one bewitched. But a day came when he began to cease from noting its marvels. Another day came when he ceased altogether to note them.

In time, he came to realize that, for him, the romance and the beauty were gone forever from the river. If the early rapture was gone, in its place was the deeper sense of knowledge and intimacy. He had learned the ultimate secrets of the river—learned them with a knowledge, so searching and so profound, that he was enabled to give them the enduring investiture of art.

Mark Twain possessed the gift of innate eloquence. He was a master of the art of moving, touching, swaying an audience. At times, his insight into the mysterious springs of humour, of passion, and of pathos seemed almost like divination. All these qualities appeared in full flower in the written expression of his art. It would be doing a disservice to his memory to deny that his style did not possess literary distinction or elegance. At times his judgment was at fault; his constitutional humour came near playing havoc with his artistic sense. Not seldom he was long-winded and laborious in his striving after comic effect. To offset these manifest lapses and defects there are the many fine qualities —descriptive passages aglow with serene and cloudless beauty, dramatic scenes depicted with virile and rugged eloquence, pathetic incidents touched with gentle and caressing tenderness.

Style bears translation ill; in fact, translation is not infrequently impossible. But Mr. Clemens once pointed out to me that humour has nothing to do with style. Mark Twain's humour—for humour is his prevalent mood—has international range since, constructed out of a deep comprehension of human nature and a profound sympathy for human relationship and human failing, it successfully surmounts the difficulties of translation into alien tongues.

Mark Twain became a great international figure, not because he was an American, paradoxical and unpatriotic as that may sound, but because he was America's greatest cosmopolitan. He was a true cosmopolitan in the Higginsonian sense, in that, unlike Mr. Henry James, he was "at home even in his own country." He was a true cosmopolitan in the Tolstoyan sense; for his was "art transmitting the simplest feelings of common life, but such, always, as are accessible to all men in the whole world—the art of common life—the art of a people—universal art." His spirit grasped the true ideal of our time and reflected it.

Mr. Clemens attributed his international success not to qualities of style, not to allegiance to any distinctive school, not to any overtopping eminence of intellect. "Many so-called American humorists," he once remarked to me, "have been betrayed by their preoccupation with the local. Their work never crossed frontiers because they failed to impart to their humour that universal element which appeals to all races of men. Realism is nothing more than close observation. But observation will never give you the inside of the thing. The life, the genius, the soul of a people are realized only through years of absorption." Mr. Clemens asseverated that the only way to be a great American humorist was to be a great human humorist—to discover in Americans those permanent and universal traits common to all nationalities. In his commentary upon Bourget's *Outre Mer*, he declared that there wasn't a single human characteristic that could safely be labelled " American "—not a single human detail, inside or outside. Through years of automatic observation, Mark Twain learned to discover for America, to adapt his own phrase, those few human peculiarities that can be generalized and located here and there in the world and named by the name of the nation where they are found.

Above all, I think, Mark Twain sympathized with and found something to admire in the citizens of every nation, seeking beneath the surface veneer the universal traits of that nation's humanity. He expressly disclaimed in my presence any " attitude " toward the world, for the very simple reason that his relation toward all peoples had been one of effort at comprehension of their ideals, and identification with them in feeling. He disavowed any colour prejudices, caste prejudices, or creed prejudices—maintaining that he could stand any society. All that he cared to know was that a man was a human being—that was bad enough for him! It is a matter not of argument, but of fact, that Mark Twain has made more damaging admissions concerning America than concerning any other nation. Lafcadio Hearn best succeeded in interpreting poetry to his Japanese students by freeing it from all artificial and local restraints, and using as examples the simplest lyrics which go straight to the heart and soul of man. His remarkable lecture on Naked Poetry is the most signal illustration of his profoundly suggestive mode of interpretation. In the same way, Mark Twain as humorist has sought the highest common factor of all nations. "My secret—if there is any secret—," Mr. Clemens once said to me, "is to create humour independent of local conditions. In studying humanity as exhibited in the people and localities I best knew and understood, I have sought to winnow out the encumbrance of the local." And he significantly added—musingly—"*Humour, like morality, has its eternal verities.*"

To the literature of the world, I venture to say, Mark Twain has contributed: his masterpiece, that provincial Odyssey of the Mississippi, *Huckleberry Finn*, a picaresque romance worthy to rank with the very best examples of picaresque fiction; *Tom Sawyer*, only little inferior to its pendent story, which might well be regarded as the supreme American morality-play of youth, *Everyboy*; *The*

Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg, an ironic fable of such originality and dexterous creation that it has no satisfactory parallel in literature; the first half of *Life on the Mississippi* and all of *Roughing It*, for their reflections of the sociological phases of a civilization now vanished forever. It is gratifying to Americans to recognize in Mark Twain the incarnation of democratic America. It is gratifying to citizens of all nationalities to recall and recapture the pleasure and delight his works have given them for decades. It is more gratifying still to rest confident in the belief that, in Mark Twain, America has contributed to the world a genius sealed of the tribe of Molière, a congener of Le Sage, of Fielding, of Defoe—a man who will be remembered, as Mr. Howells has said, "with the great humorists of all time, with Cervantes, with Swift, or with any others worthy his company; none of them was his equal in humanity."

V. PHILOSOPHER, MORALIST, SOCIOLOGIST

"Diligently train your ideals upward and still upward towards a summit where you will find your chiefest pleasure in conduct which, while contenting you, will be sure to confer benefits upon your neighbour and the community."

MARK TWAIN: *What is Man?*

PHILOSOPHER, MORALIST, SOCIOLOGIST

"The humorous writer," says Thackeray, "professes to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your kindness, your scorn for untruth, pretension, and imposture, your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. To the best of his means and ability he comments on all the ordinary actions and passions of life almost. He takes upon himself to be the week-day preacher, so to speak. Accordingly, as he finds, and speaks, and feels the truth best, we regard him, esteem him—sometimes love him." This definition is apt enough to have been made with Mark Twain in mind. In an earlier chapter, is displayed the comic phase of Mark Twain's humour. Beneath that humour, underlying it and informing it, is a fund of human concern, a wealth of seriousness and pathos, and a universality of interests which argue real power and greatness. These qualities, now to be discussed, reveal Mark Twain as serious enough to be regarded as a real moralist and philosopher, humane enough to be regarded as, in spirit, a true sociologist and reformer.

It must be recognised that the history of literature furnishes forth no great international figure, whose fame rests solely upon the basis of humour, however human, however sympathetic, however universal that humour may be. Behind that humour must lurk some deeper and more serious implication which gives breadth and solidity to the art-product. Genuine humour, as Landor has pointed out, requires a "sound and capacious mind, which is always a grave one." There is always a breadth of philosophy, a depth of sadness, or a profundity of pathos in the very greatest humorists. Both Rabelais and La Fontaine were reflective dreamers; Cervantes fought for the progressive and the real in pricking the bubble of Spanish chivalry; and Molière declared that, for a man in his position, he could do no better than attack the vices of his time with ridiculous likenesses. Though exhibiting little of the melancholy of Lincoln, Mark Twain revelled in the same directness of thought and expression, showed the same zest for broad humour reeking with the strong but pungent flavour of the soil. Though expressing distaste for Franklin's somewhat cold and almost mercenary injunctions, Mark Twain nevertheless has much of his Yankee thrift, shrewdness, and bed-rock common sense. Beneath and commingled with all his boyish and exuberant fun is a note of pathos subdued but unmistakable, which rings true beside the forced and extravagant pathos of Dickens. His Southern hereditament of chivalry, his compassion for the oppressed and his defence of the down-trodden, were never in abeyance from the beginning of his career to the very end. Like Joel Chandler Harris, that genial master of African folk-lore, Mark Twain found no theme of such absorbing interest as human nature. Like Fielding, he wrote immortal narratives in which the prime concern is not the "story," but the almost scientific revelation of the *natural history* of the characters. The corrosive and mordant irony of many a passage in Mark Twain, wherein he holds up to scorn the fraudulent and the artificial, the humbug, the hypocrite, the sensualist, are not unworthy of the colossal Swift. That "disposition for hard hitting with a moral purpose to sanction it," which George Meredith pronounces the national disposition of British humour, is Mark Twain's unmistakable hereditament. It is, perhaps, because he relates us to our origins, as Mr. Brander Matthews has suggested, that Mark Twain is the foremost of American humorists.

In the preface to the *Jumping Frog*, published as far back as 1867, Mark Twain was dubbed, not only " the wild humorist of the Pacific slope," but also " the moralist of the Main." The first book which brought him great popularity, *The Innocents Abroad*, exhibited qualities of serious ethical import which, while escaping the attention of the readers of that day, emerge for the moderns from the welter of hilarious humour. How unforgettable is his righteous indignation over that " benefit " performance he witnessed in Italy!

The ingrained quality in Mark Twain, which perhaps more than any other won the enthusiastic admiration of his fellow Americans, was this: he always had the courage of his convictions. He writes of things, classic and hallowed by centuries, with a freshness of viewpoint, a total indifference to crystallized opinion, that inspire tremendous respect for his courage, even when one's own convictions are not engaged. The " beautiful love story of Abelard and Heloise " will never, I venture to say, recover its pristine glory—now that Mark Twain has poured over Abelard the vials of his wrath.

Those who know only the Mark Twain of the latter years, with his deep, underlying seriousness, his grim irony, and his passion for justice and truth, find difficulty in realizing that, in his earlier days, the joker and the buffoon were almost solely in evidence. In answer to a query of mine as to the reason for the serious spirit that crept into and gave carrying power to his humour, Mr. Clemens frankly replied: "I never wrote a serious word until after I married Mrs. Clemens. She is solely responsible—to her should go the credit—for any deeply serious or moral influence my subsequent work may exert. After my marriage, she edited everything I wrote. And what is more—she not only edited my works, she edited *me*! After I had written some side-splitting story, something beginning seriously and ending in preposterous anti-climax, she would say to me: 'You have a true lesson, a serious meaning to impart here. Don't give way to your invincible temptation to destroy the good effect of your story by some extravagantly comic absurdity. Be yourself! Speak out your real thoughts as humorously as you please, but—without farcical commentary. Don't destroy your purpose with an ill-timed joke.' I learned from her that the only right thing was to get in my serious meaning always, to treat my audience fairly, to let them really feel the underlying moral that gave body and essence to my jest."

The quality with which Mark Twain invests his disquisitions upon morals, upon conscience, upon human foibles and failings, is the charm of the humorist always—never the grimness of the moralist or the coldness of the philosopher. He observes all human traits, whether of moral sophistry or ethical casuistry, with the genial sympathy of a lover of his kind irradiated with the riant comprehension of the humorist. And yet at times there creeps into his tone a note of sincere and manly pathos, unmistakable, irresistible. One has only to read the beautiful, tender tale of the blue jay in *A Tramp Abroad* to know the beauty and the depth of his feeling for nature and her creatures, his sense of kinship with his brothers of the animal kingdom.

In our first joyous and headlong interest in the narrative of *Huckleberry Finn*, its rapid succession of continuously arresting incidents, its omnipresent yet never intrusive humour, the deeper significance of many a passage in that contemporary classic is likely to escape notice. Sir Walter Besant, who revelled in it as one of the most completely satisfying and delightful of books, speaks of it deliberately as a book without a moral. Perhaps he was deceived by the foreword: "Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot." There never was a more easy-going, care-free, unpuritanical lot than Huck and Jim, the two farcical "hoboes," Tom Sawyer, and the rest. And yet in the light of Mark Twain's later writings one cannot but see in that picaresque romance, with its pleasingly loose moral atmosphere, an underlying seriousness and conviction. Jim is a simple, harmless negro, childlike and primitive; yet, so marvellous, so restrained is the art of the narrator, that imperceptibly, unconsciously, one comes to feel not only a deep interest in, but a genuine respect for, this innocent fugitive from slavery. Mr. Booker Washington, a distinguished representative of his race, said he could not help feeling that, in the character of Jim, Mark Twain had, perhaps unconsciously, exhibited his sympathy for and interest in the masses of the negro people.

Indeed, to the reflective mind—and it is to be presumed that by that standard Mark Twain's works will ultimately be judged—there is no more significant passage in *Huckleberry Finn* than that in which Huck struggles with his conscience over the knotty problem of his moral responsibility for compassing Jim's emancipation. Nothing else is needed to show at once Mark Twain's preoccupation with the workings of human conscience in the unsophisticated mind and his conviction that, with the " lights that he had," Huck was justified in his courageous decision.

Huck felt deeply repentant for allowing Jim to escape from the innocent, inoffending Miss Watson. He became consumed with horror and remorse to hear Jim making plans for stealing his wife and children, if their masters wouldn't sell them. His conscience kept stirring him up hotter than ever when he heard Jim talking to himself about the joys of freedom. After awhile, Huck decided to write a letter to Miss Watson, informing her of the whereabouts of her " runaway nigger." After writing that letter, he felt washed clean of sin, uplifted, exalted. But he could not forget all the goodness and tenderness of poor Jim, who had shown himself so profoundly grateful. Though he faced the torments of Puritanical damnation as a consequence, he resolved to let Jim go free. Humanity triumphed over conscience—and with an " All right, then, I'll *go* to hell," he tore up the letter.

One of Mark Twain's favourite themes for the display of his humour was the subject of prevarication. He seemed never to tire of ringing the changes upon the theme of the lie, its utility, its convenience, and its consequences. Doubtless he chose to dabble in falsehood because it is generally winked at as the most venial of all moral obliquities—a fault which is the most thoroughly universal of all that flesh is heir to. The incident of George Washington and the cherry tree furnished the basis for countless of his anecdotes; he wrung from it variations innumerable, from the epigram to the anecdote. His distinction between George Washington and himself, redounding immeasurably to his own glory, and demonstrating his complete superiority to Washington as a moral character, is classic: "George Washington couldn't tell a lie. I can; but I won't." Perhaps his most humorous anecdote, based upon the same story, is in connection with the exceedingly old "darky" he once met in the South, who claimed to have crossed the Delaware with Washington. "Were you with Washington," asked Mark Twain mischievously, "when he took that hack at the cherry tree?" This was a poser for the old darkey; his pride was appealed to, his very character was at stake. After an awkward hesitation, the old darkey spoke up, a gleam of simulated recollection (and real gratification for his convenient memory) overspreading his countenance: "Lord, boss, I was dar. In cose I was. I was with Marse George at dat very time. In fac—I done druv dat hack myself "!

Mark Twain's most delightful trick as a popular humorist was to strike out some comic epigram, that passed currency with the masses whose fancy it tickled, and also had upon it the minted stamp of the classic aphorism. These epigrams were frequently pseudo-moral in their nature; and their humour usually lay in the assumption that everybody is habitually addicted to prevarication—which is just precisely true enough and reprehensible enough to validate the epigram. His method was humorous inversion; and he told a story whose morals are so ludicrously twisted that the right moral, by contrast, spontaneously springs to light. "Never tell a lie—except for practice," is less successful than the more popularly known "When in doubt, tell the truth." Out of the latter maxim he succeeded in extracting a further essence of humour. He admitted inventing the maxim, but never expected it to be applied to himself. His advice, he said, was intended for *other* people; when he was in doubt himself, he used more sagacity! Mark Twain has made no more delightful epigram than that one in which he recognizes that a lie, morally reprehensible as it may be, is undoubtedly an ever present help in time of need: "Never waste a lie. You never know when you may need it."

Sometimes in a humorous, sometimes in a grimly serious way, Mark Twain was fond of drawing the distinction between theoretical and practical morals. Theoretical morals, he would point out, are the sort you get on your mother's knee, in good books, and from the pulpit. You get them into your head, not into your heart. Only by the commission of crime can anyone acquire real morals. Commit all the crimes in the decalogue, take them in rotation, persevere in this stern determination—and after awhile you will thereby attain to moral perfection! It is not enough to commit just one crime or two—though every little bit helps. Only by committing them all can you achieve real morality! It is interesting to note this distinction between Mark Twain, the humorous moralist, and Bernard Shaw, the ethical thinker. Each teaches precisely the same thing—the one not even half seriously, the other with all the sharp sincerity of conviction. Shaw unhesitatingly declares that trying to be wicked is precisely the same experiment as trying to be good, viz., the discovery of character.

The range of Mark Twain's humour, from the ludicrous anecdote with comically mixed morals to the profound parable with grimly ironic conclusion, takes the measure of the ethical nature of the man. It can best be illustrated, I think, by a comparison of his anecdote of the theft of the green water-melon and the classic fable of *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg.* Mark stole a water-melon out of a farmer's wagon, while he wasn't looking. Of course stole was too harsh a term—he withdrew, he *retired* that water-melon. After getting safely away to a secluded spot, he broke the water-melon open—only to find that it was green, the greenest water-melon of the year.

The moment he saw that the water-melon was green, he felt sorry. He began to reflect—for reflection is the beginning of reform. It is only by reflecting on some crime you have committed, that you are " vaccinated " against committing it again.

So Mark began to reflect. And his reflections were of this nature: What ought a boy to do who has stolen a green water-melon? What would George Washington, who never told a lie, have done? He decided that the only real, right thing for any boy to do, who has stolen a water-melon of that class, is to make restitution. It is his duty to restore it to its rightful owner. So rising up, spiritually strengthened and refreshed by his noble resolution, Mark restored the water-melon—what there was left of it—to the farmer and—made the farmer give him a ripe one in its place ! Thus he clinched the " moral " of this story, so quaint and so ingenious ; and concluded that only in some such way as this could one be fortified against further commission of crime. Only thus could one become morally perfect !

Here, as in countless other places, Mark Twain throws over his ethical suggestion—a suggestion, by contrast, of the very converse of his literal words—the veil of paradox and exaggeration, of incongruity, fantasy, light irony. Yet beneath this outer covering of art there is a serious meaning that, like murder, will out. If demonstration were needed that Mark Twain is sealed of the tribe of moralists, that is amply supplied by that masterpiece, that triumph of invention, construction, and originality, *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg.* Here is a pure morality, daring in the extreme and incredibly original in a world perpetually reiterating a saying already thousands of years old, to the effect that there is nothing new under the sun. It is a deliberate emendation of that invocation in the Lord's Prayer: "Lead us (not) into temptation." The shrieking irony of this trenchant parable, its cynicism and heartlessness, would make of it an unendurable criticism of human life—were it accepted literally as a representation of society. In essence it is a morality pure and simple, animated not only by its brilliantly original ethical suggestion, but also by its illuminating reflection of human nature and its graciously relieving humour. In that exultant letter which the *Diabolus ex machina* wrote to the betrayed villagers, he sneers at their old and lofty reputation for honesty—that reputation of which they were so inordinately proud and vain. The weak point in their armour was disclosed so soon as he discovered how carefully and vigilantly they kept themselves and their children out of temptation. For he well knew that the weakest of all weak things is a virtue that has not been tested in the fire. The familiar distinction between innocence and virtue springs to mind. And it is worthy of consideration that Nietzsche, and Shaw after him, both point out that virtue consists, not in resisting evil, but in not desiring it! *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg* is a masterpiece, eminently worthy of the genius of a Swift. It proclaims Mark Twain not only as a supreme artist, but also as eminently and distinctively a moralist.

It is impossible to think of Mark Twain in his maturer development as other than a moralist. My personal acquaintance with Mr. Clemens convinced me—had I needed to be convinced—that in his later years he had striven to grapple nobly with many of the deeper issues of life, character and morality, public, religious and social, as well as personal and private. I never knew anyone who thought so " straight," or who expressed himself with such simple directness upon questions affecting religion and conduct. He was absolutely fearless in his condemnation of those subsidized " ministers " of the Gospel in cosmopolitan centres, who, through self-interest, cut their moral disquisitions to fit the predilections of their wealthy parishioners, many of whom were under national condemnation as " malefactors of great wealth." Animated by love for all creatures, the defenceless wild animal as well as the domestic pet, he was unsparing in his indictment of those big-game hunters who shamelessly described their feelings of savage exultation when some poor animal served as the target for their skill, and staggered off wounded unto death. His sympathy for the natives of the Congo was profound and intense; and his philippic against King Leopold for the atrocities he sanctioned called the attention of the whole world to conditions that constituted a disgrace to modern civilization. His diatribe against the Czar of Russia for his inhumanity to the serfs was an equally convincing proof of his noble determination to throw the whole weight of his influence in behalf of suffering and oppressed humanity. Some years before his death, he told me that he never intended to speak in public again save in behalf of movements, humanitarian and uplifting, which gave promise of effecting civic betterment and social improvement.

I have always felt a peculiar and personal debt of gratitude to Mark Twain for three events—for the publication of such works can be dignified with no less eminent characterization. When Mr. Edward Dowden tried to make out the best case for Shelley that he could, it was at the sacrifice of the reputation of the defenceless Harriet Westbrook. That ingrained chivalry which is the defining characteristic of the Southerner, the sympathy for the oppressed, the compassion for the weak and the defenceless, animated Mark Twain to one of the noblest actions of his career. For his defence of Harriet Westbrook is something more than a work, it is an act—an act of high courage and nobility. With words icily cold in their logic, Mark Twain tabulated the six pitifully insignificant charges against Harriet, such as her love for dress and her waning interest in Latin lessons, and set over against them the six times repeated name of *Cornelia Turner*, that fascinating young married woman who read Petrarch with Shelley and sat up all hours of the night with him—because he saw visions when he was alone! Again, in his *Joan of Arc*, Mark Twain erected a monument of enduring beauty to that simple maid of Orleans, to whom the Roman Catholic Church has just now paid the merited yet tardy tribute of canonization. It is a sad commentary upon the popular attitude of frivolity towards the professional humorist that Mark Twain felt compelled to publish this book anonymously, in order that the truth and beauty of that magic story might receive its just meed of respectful and sympathetic attention.

The third act for which I have always felt deeply grateful to Mark Twain is the apparently little known, yet beautiful and significant story entitled *Was it Heaven or Hell?* It contains, I believe, the moral that had most meaning for Mark Twain throughout his entire life—the bankruptcy of rigidly formal Puritanism in the face of erring human nature, the tragic result of heedlessly holding to the letter, instead of wisely conforming to the spirit, of moral law. No one doubts that Mark Twain—as who would not?—believed, aye, knew, that this sweet, human child went to a heaven of forgiveness and mercy, not to a hell of fire and brimstone, for her innocently trivial transgression. The essay on Harriet Shelley, the novel of *Joan of Arc*, and the story *Was it Heaven or Hell?* are all, as decisively as the philippic against King Leopold, the diatribe against the Czar of Russia, essential vindications of the moral principle. *Was it Heaven or Hell?* in its simple pathos, *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg* in its morally salutary irony, present vital evidence of that same transvaluation of current moral values which marks the age of Nietzsche and Ibsen, of Tolstoy and Shaw. In that amusing, naïve biography of her father, little Susy admits that he could make exceedingly bright jokes and could be extremely amusing; but she maintains that he was more interested in earnest books and earnest conversation than in humorous ones. She pronounced him to be as much of a Pholosopher (*sic*) as anything. And she hazards the opinion that he might have done a great deal in this direction if only he had studied when he was a boy!

Years ago, Mark Twain wrote a book which he called *An Extract from Captain Stormfield's Visit to Heaven.* For long he desisted from publishing it because of his fear that its outspoken frankness would appear irreverent and shock the sensibilities of the public. While his villa of "Stormfield" was in course of erection several years ago, he discovered that half of it was going to cost what he had expected to pay for the whole house. His heart was set on having a loggia or sun-parlour; and when it seemed that he would have to sacrifice this apple of his eye through lack of funds, he threw discretion to the winds, hauled out Captain Stormfield and made the old tar pay the piper. His fears as to its reception were wholly unwarranted; for it was generously enjoyed for its shrewd and vastly suggestive ideas on religion and heaven as popularly taught nowadays from the pulpits. This book is full of a keen and bluff common sense, cannily expressed in the words of an old sea-captain whom Mark Twain had known intimately. It is only another link in the chain of evidence which goes to prove that Mark Twain had thought long and deeply upon the problematical nature of a future life. It is, in essence, a *reductio ad absurdum* of those professors of religion who still preach a heaven of golden streets and pearly gates, of idleness and everlasting psalm-singing, of restful and innocuous bliss. Mark Twain wanted to point out the absurdity of taking the allegories and the figurative language of the Bible literally. Of course everybody called for a harp and a halo as soon as they reached heaven. They were given the harps and halos—indeed nothing harmless and reasonable was refused them. But they found these things the merest accessories. Mark Twain's heaven was just the busiest place imaginable. There weren't any idle people there after the first day. The old sea captain pointed out that singing hymns and waving palm branches through all eternity was all very pretty when you heard about it from the pulpit, but that it was a mighty poor way to put in valuable time. He took no stock in a heaven of warbling ignoramuses. He found that Eternal Rest, reduced to hard pan, was not as comforting as it sounds in the pulpit. Heaven is the merited reward of service; and the opportunities for service were infinite. As he said, you've got to earn a thing square and honest before you can enjoy it. To Mark, this was " about the sensiblest heaven " he had ever heard of. He mourned a little over the discovery that what a man mostly missed in heaven was *company*. But he rejoiced in the information vouchsafed by his friend the Captain—a valuable piece of information that leaves him, and all who are so fortunate as to hear it, the better for the knowledge—that happiness isn't a thing in itself, but only a contrast with something that isn't pleasant! This view of heaven, seen through the temperament of a humorist and a philosopher, is provocative and thought-compelling more than it is amusing or ludicrous. I think it inspired Bernard Shaw's *Aerial Foot-ball* which won Collier's thousand dollar prize—a prize which Mr Shaw hurled back with indignation and scorn!

Mark Twain was a great humorist—more genial than grim, more good-humoured than ironic, more given to imaginative exaggeration than to intellectual sophistication, more inclined to pathos than to melancholy. He was a great story-teller and fabulist; and he has enriched the literature of the world with a gallery of portraits so human in their likenesses as to rank them with the great figures of classic comedy and picaresque romance. He was a remarkable observer and faithful reporter, never allowing himself, in Ibsen's phrase, to be "frightened by the venerableness of the institution"; and his sublimated journalism reveals a mastery of the naïvely comic thoroughly human and democratic. He is the most eminent product of our American democracy, and, in profoundly shocking Great Britain by preferring Connecticut to Camelot, he exhibited that robustness of outlook, that buoyancy of spirit, and that faith in the contemporary which stamps America in perennial and inexhaustible youth. Throughout his long life, he has been a factor of high ethical influence in our civilization, and the philosopher and the humanitarian look out through the twinkling eyes of the humorist.

And yet, after all, Mark Twain's supreme title to distinction as a great writer inheres in his natural, if not wholly conscious, mastery in that highest sphere of thought, embracing religion, philosophy, morality and even humour, which we call sociology. When I first advanced this view, it was taken up on all sides. Here, we were told, was Mark Twain "from a new angle"; the essay was reviewed at length on the continent of Europe; and the author of the essay was invited "to explain Mark Twain to the German public"! There are still many people, however, who resent any demonstration that Mark Twain was anything more than a mirthful and humorous entertainer. Mr. Bernard Shaw once remarked to me, in support of the view here outlined, that he regarded Poe and Mark Twain as America's greatest achievements in literature, and that he thought of Mark Twain primarily, not as humorist, but as sociologist. "Of course," he added, "Mark Twain is in much the same position as myself: he has to put matters in such a way as to make people who would otherwise hang him, believe he is joking."

Mark Twain once said that whenever he had diverged from custom and principle to utter a truth, the rule had been that the hearer hadn't strength of mind enough to believe it. "Custom is a petrifaction," he asserted; "nothing but dynamite can dislodge it for a century." Mr. W. D. Howells has advanced the somewhat fanciful theory that "the ludicrous incongruity of a slave-holding democracy nurtured upon the Declaration of Independence, and the comical spectacle of white labour owning black labour, had something to do in quickening (in Mark Twain) the sense of contrast which is the mountain of humour or is said to be so." However that may be, Mark Twain was irresistibly driven to the conclusion, Southern born though he was, that slavery was unjust, inhuman, and indefensible. The advanced thinkers in the South had reached this conclusion long before the beginning of the Civil War, and many Southern men had actually devised freedom to their slaves in their wills. The slaves were treated humanely, their material wants were cared for by their owners with a care that can only be called loving, and their spiritual welfare was the frequent concern in particular of the mistress of the house.

In his schoolboy days, Mark Twain had no aversion to slavery. He wasn't even aware that there was anything wrong about it. He never heard it condemned by acquaintances or in the local papers. And as for the preachers, they taught that God approved slavery, and cited Biblical passages in support of that view. If the slaves themselves were averse to it, at least they kept discreetly silent on the subject. He seldom saw a slave misused—on the farm, never. But when he was brought face to face with Sandy, the little slave forcibly separated from his family, it made a deep impression upon his consciousness. It was this deplorable evil of the system, this unnatural and inhuman forcible separation of the members of the same family, the one from the other, that convinced him of the injustice of slavery; though this vision, as has been pointed out by Mr. Howells, did not come to him "till after his liberation from neighbourhood in the vaster far West." Yet it found its way into his books—into *Huckleberry Finn*, with its recital of Jim's pathetic longing to buy back his wife and children; and in *Pudd'nhead Wilson* with its moving picture of the poor slave's agony when she suddenly realizes in the way the water is flowing around the snag that she is being "sold down the river." In

Uncle Tom's Cabin, as Professor Phelps has pointed out, " the red-hot indignation of the author largely nullified her evident desire to tell the truth. . . . Mrs. Stowe's astonishing work is not really the history of slavery; it is the history of abolition sentiment. . . . Mark Twain shows us the beautiful side of slavery—for it had a wonderfully beautiful, patriarchal side—and he also shows us the horror of it." Mark Twain has declared that the only way to write a great novel is to learn the scenes and people with which the story is concerned, through years of " unconscious absorption " of the facts of the life to be portrayed. When his stories were written, slavery was a thing of the past—he was competent to judge of the situation impartially, through direct personal contact throughout his boyhood with the realities of slavery. His object was not the object of the reformer, warped with prejudice and fired by animosity. He saw clearly; for his aim was not polemic, but artistic. Hence it is, I believe, that Mark Twain stands out as, in essence and in fundamentals, a remarkable sociologist. Certain passages in his books on the subject of slavery, as the historian Lecky has declared, are the truest things that have ever been expressed on the subject which vexed a continent and plunged a nation in bloody, fratricidal strife.

Huckleberry Finn and *Life on the Mississippi* always call up to my mind the most vivid pictures —pictures that are eternally unforgettable. The memorable scene in which Colonel Sherburne quells the mob and his scathing remarks upon lynching; the reality and the pathos of the feuds of those Kentucky families, the Shepherdsons and the Grangerfords, shooting each other down at sight in vindication of honour and pride of race; the lordly life of the pilot on the Mississippi, his violent and unchallenged sway over his subordinates, his mastery of the river; the variegated colours of that lawless, picturesque, semi-barbarous life of the river—all these sweep by us in a series of panoramic pictures as Huck's raft swings lazily down the tawny river, and Horace Bixby guides his boat through the dangers of the channel. Mark Twain is primarily a great artist, only unconsciously a true sociologist. But his power as a sociologist is no less real that it is unconscious, indeed infinitely more real and human and verisimilar that it is not polemical. There is a "sort of contemporaneous posterity" which has registered its verdict that Mark Twain was the greatest humorist of the present era. But there is yet to come that greater posterity of the future which will, I dare say, class Mark Twain as America's greatest, most human sociologist in letters. He is the historian, the historian in *art*, of a varied and unique phase of civilization on the American continent that has passed forever. And it is inconceivable that any future investigator into the sociological phases of that civilization can fail to find priceless and unparalleled documents in the wild yet genial, rudimentary yet sane, boisterous yet universally human writings of Mark Twain.

Mark Twain's genius of social comprehension and sociologic interpretation went even deeper than this. His mastery lay not alone in penetrative reflection of a bit of sectional life and a vanished phase of our civilization, not alone in astute criticism of an " institution " blotted from the American escutcheon and a collective racial passion that periodically breaks forth from time to time in mad " carnivals of crime." The defining quality of the true sociologist, that quality which gives his profession its power and validity as an effective instrumentality in the advancement of civilization, is the faculty of penetrating national and racial disguises, and going directly to the heart of the human problem. Mark Twain possessed this faculty in supreme degree. As a literary critic he was banal and futile; but as a social and racial critic he was remarkable and profound. His essay *Concerning the Jews* is a masterpiece of impartial interpretation; his comprehension of French and German racial traits, as revealed in his works, is keen and pervasively pertinent; and his magnificent analysis of the situation in South Africa, in the concluding chapters of *Following the Equator*, rings clear with the accents of truth and mounts almost to the dignity of public prophecy. Deeper far, more comprehensive, and voiced with splendid courage, are Mark Twain's interpretations of American democracy and his mirroring of the national ideals. His "defence" of General Funston is a scorching and devastating blast, red with the fires of patriotism. Whatever be one's convictions, one cannot but respect the profound sincerity of Mark Twain's berserker-like rage over the attitude of Europe in China, the barbarities of Russian autocracy, and the horrors of America's methods in the Philippines, copied after Weyler's *reconcentrado* policy in Cuba. His study of Christian Science, despite its hyperbole, its gross exaggerations and unfulfilled prophecies, is the expression of glorified common-sense, a sociological study of religious fanaticism comprehensive in psychological analysis of national and racial traits.

In his own works, Mark Twain brought to realization the dim and inchoate fancies of Whitman; in his own person he realized that "divine average" of common life which is the dream of American democracy. *The Prince and the Pauper* is a beautiful child's tale, vivid in narrative and rich in human interest. It is something deeper far than this; for the very crucial motive of the story, the successful substitution of the commoner for the king, transforms it into a symbolic legend of democracy and the equality of man. Mark Twain vehemently approved the French revolution, and frankly expressed his regret over Napoleon's failure to invade England and thus destroy the last vestiges of the semi-feudal paraphernalia of the British monarchy. Despite its note of Yankee blatancy, *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur* is a remarkable brief for democracy and the brotherhood of man. So eminent a publicist as Mr. William T. Stead pronounced it, at the time of its first appearance, one of the most significant books of our time; and classed it (with Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* and Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*) as the third great book from America to give tremendous impetus to the social democratic movement of the age. Mark Twain abandoned all hope of a future life; found more of sorrow than of joy in life's balances ; and even, in his latter years, lost faith in humanity itself. But amid the wreck of faiths and creeds, he achieved the strange paradox of American optimism : he never lost faith in democracy, and fought valiantly to the end in behalf of equality and the welfare of the average man.

Several years ago, when we were crossing the Atlantic on the same ship, Mr. Clemens told me that while he was living in Hartford in the early eighties, I think, he wrote a paper to be read at the fortnightly club to which he belonged. This club was composed chiefly of men whose deepest interests were concerned with the theological and the religiously orthodox. One of his friends, to whom he read this paper in advance, solemnly warned him not to read it before the club. For he felt confident that a philosophical essay, expressing candid doubt as to the existence of free will, and declaring without hesitation that every man was under the immitigable compulsion of his temperament, his training, and his environment, would appear unspeakably shocking, heretical and blasphemous to the orthodox members of that club. " I did not read that paper," Mr. Clemens said to me, " but I put it away, resolved to let it stand the corrosive test of time. Every now and then, when it occurred to me, I used to take that paper out and read it, to compare its views with my own later views. From time to time I added something to it. But I never found, during that quarter of a century, that my views had altered in the slightest degree. I had a few copies published not long ago; but there is not the slightest evidence in the book to indicate its authorship." A few days later he gave me a copy, and when I read that book, I found these words, among others, in the prefatory note:

"Every thought in them (these papers) has been thought (and accepted as unassailable truth) by millions upon millions of men — and concealed, kept private. Why did they not speak out? Because they dreaded (and could not bear) the disapproval of the people around them. Why have I not published? The same reason has restrained me, I think. I can find no other."

What is Man? propounds at length, through the medium of a dialogue between a Young Man and an Old Man, the doctrine that "Beliefs are acquirements; temperaments are born. Beliefs are subject to change; nothing whatever can change temperament." He enunciates the theory, which seems to me both brilliant and original, that there can be no such person as a permanent seeker after truth.

"When he found the truth he sought no farther; but from that day forth, with his soldering iron in one hand and his bludgeon in the other, he tinkered its leaks and reasoned with objectors." "All training," he avers, "is one form or another of outside influences, and association is the largest part of it. A man is never anything but what his outside influences have made him. They train him downward or they train him upward—but they train him; they are at work upon him all the time." Once asked by Rudyard Kipling whether he was ever going to write another story about Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain replied that he had a notion of writing the sequel to *Tom Sawyer* in two parts, in one bringing him to high honour, and in the other bringing him to the gallows. When Kipling protested vigorously against any theory of the sort, because Tom Sawyer was *real*, Mark Twain replied with the fatalistic doctrine of *What is Man?*: "Oh, he *is* real. He's all the boy that I have known or recollect; but that would be a good way of ending the book—because, when you come to think of it, neither religion, training, nor education avails anything against the force of circumstances that drive a man. Suppose we took the next four and twenty years of Tom Sawyer's life, and gave a little joggle to the circumstances that controlled him. He would, logically and according to the joggle, turn out a rip or an angel." It was what he called Kismet.

It is one of the tragedies of his life, so sad in many ways, that in the days when the blows of fate fell heaviest upon his head, he had lost all faith in the Christian ideals, all belief in immortality or a personal God. And yet he avowed that, no matter what form of religion or theology, atheism or agnosticism, the individual or the nation embraced, the human race remained "indestructibly content, happy, thankful, proud." He never had a tinge of pessimism in his make-up, his beliefs never tended to warp his nature, he accepted his fatalism gladly because he saw in it supreme truth. His ultimate philosophy of life, which he sums up in *What is Man?*, is healthy and right-minded. It is best embodied in the lofty injunction: "Diligently train your ideals upward and still upward towards a summit where you will find your chiefest pleasure in conduct which, while contenting you, will be sure to confer benefits upon your neighbour and the community." Lassalle once said: "History forgives mistakes and failures, but not want of conviction." In Mark Twain, posterity will never be called upon to forgive any want of conviction.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS, ESSAYS, AND ARTICLES DEALING WITH MARK TWAIN (SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS)

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- *Mark Twain in Clubland.* By William H. Rideing.
- *Mark Twain a Century Hence.* By H. T. Peck.
- *The Story of Mark Twain's Debts.* By Frederick A. King.

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*

NOTE.—This bibliography of more than two hundred and thirty titles, although it has been compiled with care and after considerable research, is of necessity incomplete. There remain numerous articles, essays, and "interviews," scattered about, in newspapers and magazines, all over the world. These articles are not indexed and consequently are difficult to trace; yet, in many cases, they contain valuable biographical data for the life of Mark Twain. The author of the present work will sincerely appreciate any aid given him in the effort to perfect the present bibliography, and will gratefully acknowledge all articles or titles sent to him through his publishers, American or English. All who admire and love the works of Mark Twain may show their appreciation by adding their mite to the present bibliography.

* *The International Fame of Mark Twain.* By Archibald Henderson. "North American Review," December.

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